REDEMPTION IN THE WORK OF FRANCIS STUART

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CONTENTS

SYNOPSIS

The idea of redemption is central to an understanding of the work of Francis Stuart. Through an examination of its development and expression, it is possible to demonstrate the integrity of his work and its distinctive qualities. Such a demonstration is necessary because Stuart's writing has been subjected to comparatively little scholarly inquiry, although reviews of his work, especially that produced since 1949, suggest that it is impressive and important.

First, a general background to Stuart's work, a discussion of the special problems associated with reading it, and a summary of his corpus is provided. This indicates that the idea of redemption is important to his earliest writing. The state of redemption is shown to be a necessary apotheosis for Stuart's outcast heroes; it involves spiritual suffering through which may be found a sense of reintegration and a higher reality. This is expressed through interrelated themes such as those of gambler, artist and ordinary man; mystic and criminal; sacred and profane love; and spirituality and the mundane. The nature of the redemptive experience is further elaborated by distinctive, complex motifs, especially the hare, the ark and the woman-Christ. Their recurrence provides an important element in the unity of Stuart's work. Because Stuart's idea of the outcast raises important biographical questions, an examination of the relationship between Stuart's life and his work is made. Finally, the way in which the idea of redemption exists in the language structures of Stuart's novels is examined, with especial reference to his most recent work, The High Consistory. The thesis shows that the development of the theme of redemption demonstrates the integrity of Stuart's work.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND, PROBLEMS AND SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

In 1932 an American journal described Francis Stuart as 'a young Irish patriot, poet and novelist'.[1] The details of Stuart's life up to that point seemed to support this identification of him with a recognisable public role. Although coming from a Northern Ireland Unionist family, he had converted to Roman Catholicism before his marriage to Maud Gonne's daughter, Iseult, in 1920. The Free State had interned him in Maryborough prison and the Curragh Camp for fighting on the Republican side in the Civil War; shortly after his release he published a collection of poems entitled We Have Kept the Faith (1924)[2] which, in 1929, received a prize from the Royal Irish Academy. In the same year, Sinn Fein published a lecture on Nationality and Culture (1924)[3] which Stuart had given for them; and W. B. Yeats contributed 'Leda and the Swan' and an editorial to the first number of To-Morrow (August 1924),[4] a tabloid literary periodical produced by Stuart in

1 Anonymous, Biographical Portrait, 'Francis Stuart', Wilson Bulletin (December 1932), p. 216. The same item appears in Saturday Review of Literature, 10, no. 5 (July 1933), 216.

2 H. Stuart, We Have Kept the Faith (Dublin, 1923).

3 Francis Stuart, Nationality and Culture (Baile Atha Cliath, 1924). J. H. Natterstad, 'Francis Stuart: A Checklist', Journal of Irish Literature, 5, no. 1 (January 1976), 39-45 (p. 41), gives the signator of the pamphlet as H. Stuart; however, copies held by the British Library and the National Library of Ireland give the author's name as Francis Stuart.

4 To-Morrow, edited by H. Stuart and Cecil Salkeld, 1, no. 1 (August 1924); To-morrow, edited by H. Stuart, 1, no. 2 (September 1924). Although the editorial of the first number is signed by H. Stuart and Cecil Salkeld, that it is the work of W. B. Yeats is attested to by Lady Gregory's Journals, edited by Daniel J. Murphy, The Coole Edition, 2 vols (Gerrard's Cross, 1978-), I, 563; and by Francis Stuart, 'The Public Man', Hibernia, 31 October 1975, p. 14: 'the editorial written by Yeats, though signed by Cecil Salkeld and myself in the first number'. 'Leda and the Swan' had appeared previously in The Dial, June 1924 and in W. B. Yeats, The Cat and the Moon and Certain Poems (Dublin, 1924): see The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W. B. Yeats, edited by Peter Allt and Russell Alspach (New York, 1957), p. 441.

collaboration with F. R. Higgins, Cecil Salkeld, and Con Leventhal. Although To-Morrow ran for only two numbers, it contained work by a representative selection of important Irish literary figures, including Liam O'Flaherty, Joseph Campbell and Lennox Robinson. In 1929, Stuart wrote a booklet entitled Mystics and Mysticism[1] for the Catholic Truth Society; and between 1931 and 1932, he published three novels. The action of his first novel, Women and God (1931)[2] moves between Lourdes and Ireland and is concerned with the miraculous healing of a young woman. In Pigeon Irish (1932)[3] Europe has been defeated by an unnamed, vast military power and Ireland remains the last possible guardian of cultural and spiritual values. Yeats described Stuart's third novel, The Coloured Dome (1932)[4] as 'strange and exciting in theme and perhaps more personally and beautifully written than any book of our generation; it makes you understand the strange Ireland that is rising up here'.[5] Its hero, Gary Delea, is a bookie's clerk who is inspired to sacrifice his life for the Cause, by a mysterious I.R.A. leader. In 1932, Stuart became a founder member of the Irish Academy of Letters.

The content of his work, however, does not support the impression of Stuart belonging to some sort of literary and political orthodoxy. The lecture on Nationality and Culture (1924), for example, avoids political issues and demands a non-parochial, European identity for Ireland. It is concerned with the detrimental influence of English

1 Francis Stuart, Mystics and Mysticism (Dublin, [1929]). Although the pamphlet is undated, W. J. McCormack, 'The Books of Francis Stuart', in A Festschrift for Francis Stuart on his Seventieth Birthday, 28 April 1972 edited by W. J. McCormack (Dublin, 1972), pp. 48-62 (p. 55) identifies the date of publication as November, 1929 from a printer's note at the end of the text. 'Francis Stuart: A Checklist', p. 41 gives the signator of the pamphlet as H. Stuart; however, copies held by the British Library and The Catholic Truth Society of Ireland give the author's name as Francis Stuart.

2 Francis Stuart, Women and God (London, 1931).

3 Francis Stuart, Pigeon Irish (London, 1932).

4 Francis Stuart, The Coloured Dome (London, 1932).

5 The Letters of W. B. Yeats edited by Allan Wade (London, 1954) p. 799-800.

culture on Irish culture, and the lack of popularity of a distinctively Irish literature. However, the debate about the language question - can literature be Irish when it is written in English - a real bone of contention at the time[1] - is neatly sidestepped and the works of Fintan Lalor are recommended to the audience. As well, Stuart demands a better national theatre, more involvement in film and radio broadcasting and shows a concern for the architecture and the lack of trees in Ireland. Although some of these were general concerns, others are more strongly individual, and the tone of the lecture is personal and intimate. The little magazine To-Morrow (1924) caused something of a stir, and was more obviously innovatory in its ideas. In the first number, a short story by Lennox Robinson, 'The Madonna of Slieve Dun',[2] was regarded as an attempt 'to pervert the nation';[3] George Yeats believed that 'Leda and the Swan' would be 'spoken of as something horribly indecent'[4] because of its publication in the same issue; and the editorial, proclaiming 'that we can forgive the sinner, but abhor the atheist, and that we count among atheists bad writers and Bishops of all denominations'[5] was deliberately provocative. The scandal, which obliged Lennox Robinson to resign as Secretary to the Carnegie Committee, is recorded in Lady Gregory's Journals.[6] Her account has much unintentional humour: the Provost of Trinity College found Yeats's 'Leda and the Swan' and Robinson's story 'very offensive', as well as another

1 Douglas Hyde and Daniel Corkery refused to join the Irish Academy of Letters because they believed very strongly that Irish writers should be defined as those who wrote in Irish.

2 Lennox Robinson, 'The Madonna of Slieve Dun', To-Morrow, 1, no. 1 (August 1924), 1, 7-8.

3 Lady Gregory's Journals, p. 584.

4 Lady Gregory's Journals, p. 563. The poem appeared on p. 2 of To-Morrow, no. 1.

5 To-Morrow, no. 1, p. 4.

6 In Lady Gregory, Journals, edited by Lennox Robinson (London, 1946), p. 272-282, a selection from Lady Gregory's Journals edited by Lennox Robinson, her account of the affair is headed 'The Carnegie Row' and prefaced by an introductory note written by Robinson.

story - 'one must speak plainly - it is about the intercourse of white women with black men' - and she records that 'Yeats has advised the Stuarts to appeal to the Pope as to the morality of L. R.'s story'. Although the significance of the incident seems to have been exaggerated out of all proportion, it suggests the unconventionality of Stuart's ideas.

The appearance of working within an identifiable literary milieu while actually moving away from it is also apparent in Stuart's book of poems. Since he had been imprisoned by the Free State and since several of the poems are dated from Tintown Prison Camp and Maryborough Military prison it might be supposed that the title We Have Kept the Faith is an affirmation of the solidarity and identity of the Republican cause. However, it has been suggested that the title is taken from a line in Rupert Brooke's poem 'The Hill',[1] which contains the following dialogue between two lovers:

> 'We are Earth's best, that learnt her lesson here.
> Life is our cry. We have kept the faith!' we said;
> 'We shall go down with unreluctant tread
> Rose-crowned into the darkness!' . . . Proud we were,
> And laughed, that had such brave things to say.
> - And then you suddenly cried, and turned away. [2]

This ambiguity is resolved by the overall theme which harmonises the poems in the collection: intense emotion, felt, lost, then recollected. The emotion is personal, often sensual, rather than collective or political; typical of it is the poem 'For A Dancer II' which gathers

1 J. H. Natterstad, Francis Stuart, Irish Writers Series, edited by J. F. Carens, (Lewisburg, 1974), p. 29 says that 'the title comes from Rupert Brooke's poem "The Hill"'. This identification is supported by a quotation in Francis Stuart, Try the Sky (London, 1933), p. 149: 'I remembered some lines from a poem: Life is our cry. We have kept the faith, we said'.

2 The Poetical Works of Rupert Brooke, edited by Geoffrey Keynes, second edition (London, 1970), p. 90.

together images of madness, nature, and combined beauty and loss:

> You were a young fountain, a mad bird
> And half a woman, a secret overheard
> In a dark [f]orest,
> Setting the trees alive, the leaves astir.
> You were my joy, my sorrowful you were! 1

Several things are important here. The feeling of Stuart's poem is clearly closer to the sense of loss in Brooke's poem, rather than any nationalistic or military feeling. However, the tone of the two poems is rather different. 'The Hill' ends with hopelessness and failure, the lovers' affirmation of the immortality of their love being negated by the stanza's final line. In 'For A Dancer II', however, the sense of rejoicing in the beauty of the dancer overcomes the sense of sorrow; Stuart is concerned with the absolute, inviolable nature of beauty which may cause sorrow but which is finally joyful because it is beautiful. Any attempts to ascribe influences on the verse must recognise its complexity. There is a sense of passion, of extravagent love, which is suggestive of some poetry of the 1890's, such as Dowson's 'Cynara' or Yeats's 'Down by the Salley Gardens'; on the other hand the poem contains elements which are definably Georgian:[2] the rural imagery - birds, forest, trees - a rejection of 'public' themes and the attempt to convey the immediacy of their relationship. As well, though, there is the presentation of 'sharp visual perceptions in lines which

1 We Have Kept the Faith, p. 16.

2 C. K. Stead, The New Poetic: Yeats to Eliot (London, 1964) describes and discriminates between two major trends in poetry in the first part of the Twentieth century, Georgian and Imagist. He suggests that a rural background, the 'rejection of large themes and of the language of rhetoric that accompanied them in the nineteenth century; and an attempt to come to terms with immediate experience, sensuous or imaginative, in a language close to common speech' (p. 88) is typical of the Georgian movement. Imagist poetry, on the other hand, developed 'as a way of presenting sharp visual perceptions in lines which preserved the emotional experience by a rigid exclusion of all elements of discourse'. (p.100).

preserved the emotional experience by the rigid exclusion of all elements of discourse' which has been suggested as characteristic of Imagist verse: the poem is a series of visual images leading to a statement which denies discourse by its deliberate, oxymoronic combination of 'joy' and 'sorrowful'. The unsatisfactoriness of such ascriptions show their inadequacy to define what seems to be a highly individual voice, interacting with other styles and concerns, but not finally belonging to any of them. The poem is interesting, therefore, because it gives some indication of the concerns which produce this individuality. Madness is allied to beauty, for instance, and is a lifegiving force, since the 'mad bird' image is picked up by the reference to a 'dark forest', in which it sets 'the trees alive, the leaves astir'. This is emphasised by the image of the fountain with which the poem opens, a symbol of life which is then redefined into the 'mad bird'. The girl is only 'half a woman', that is, she is not a woman who is like a bird, she literally is part woman and part bird; the strangeness of this depiction looks forward to the close equation made between the pigeons, Daphnis and Buttercup, and the two women in Pigeon Irish (1932) as well as, in his later novels, the interchangeable qualities of Herra and the hares in Memorial (1973).[1] The implication of the birdwoman equation is that she is both outside society and above it; the most obvious, if inexact, comparison is with the myth of Icarus, which may be interpreted as the fatal but compelling ecstasy of the artist whose death is the price for searching too deeply into the source of his inspiration. The birdwoman differs here, though, because of the sense of joy which remains and modifies the sense of sorrow. This is clear in the arrangement of the line: 'You were my joy' is a direct,

1 Francis Stuart, Memorial (London, 1973). See also Hylla and the wild hare in Francis Stuart, The White Hare (London, 1936); and Claire and the ocelot in Francis Stuart, The High Consistory (London, 1981).

forceful statement which emphasises the idea of joy, whereas 'My sorrowful you were' emphasises the sense of the past - the emphasis lies on the phrase 'you were' - into which the emotion, sorrow, has receded. The girl in the poem, then, is outside and above the world, while she is also intimately united with it, in the fountain, bird and forest, and she has achieved that state by becoming a part of some mysterious experience, through madness, perhaps, or through the 'secret overheard'.

These are qualities which are expanded in the different context of Stuart's little booklet on Mystics and Mysticism (1929). In his brief explanation of the nature of mysticism, Stuart describes it as 'a state of intimate friendship, of close union, with God . . . an experience quite beyond the unaided grasp of man, because here the senses, the only instrument that personality can normally use to unite itself to the exterior world, are useless'.[1] This relationship with God does not mean cutting oneself off from the world, however, but existing both in and beyond the world; as an example of this, he gives the Virgin Mary, who 'lived an apparently ordinary life in the midst of the world, yet in continual communion with her God'.[2] Clearly, the strangeness of the mystical experience, the sense of unity, and the equivocal relationship with the world provide parallels for the bird-girl in 'For A Dancer II' and the bird-image becomes representative of spirituality in this context. Stuart elaborates on the process of mystical experience in his booklet. It involves suffering - 'suffering, even extreme suffering, is an essential companion, or at least forerunner'[3] - but of an unusual kind, since it is intimately associated with the love that leads to the personal experience of the soul in relation to God: so, 'we cannot dissociate love from suffering. If we wish to express our love it will

1 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 4.
2 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 5.
3 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 8.

be through suffering that we will try to do so.'[1] This suffering, 'bodily and spiritual',[2] leads the way to a more profound spiritual isolation, a removal of the self from all hope and comfort, 'detachment from even those spiritual lights and gifts of God',[3] for which Stuart uses the term of St. John of the Cross, 'the Dark Night of the Soul'.[4] Only after this experience of interior desolation is it possible to experience the reintegration of the self in a complete unity with the Godhead, which characterises mysticism. The attainment of that state is through a paradoxical 'active passivity' in which the mystic makes himself ready to experience unity with God by allowing himself to be infused with God's love:

> the self cannot love God with this love, but only with a less perfect love of which she herself is the originator through God's grace . . . it is when this passivity is a conscious one and the soul knows that it receives what Père de la Taille calls a "ready-made love" poured into it from the Blessed Trinity, that its state is mystical.
> . . . Passivity, then, is an essential condition of mysticism for when a soul is sufficiently closely united to God, He acts in her rather than that she performs the acts of her own, even grace-assisted, strength. 5

On the one hand, insight must be sought through suffering, whether physical or spiritual; on the other hand, a crucial point is reached at which it is necessary to allow external influences to take over and control, or guide, the self into the experience it seeks. What is unusual, perhaps, about Stuart's booklet is its emphasis on the potential of ordinary life for mystical experience. He insists on its relevance to practical day-to-day living, although he acknowledges the difficulties of that attitude:

> In conclusion, may we not profitably look for a moment at the practical

1 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 8.
2 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 6.
3 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 7.
4 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 7.
5 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 12.

relation of mysticism to our own everyday lives? The relation may not at first appear very evident. Nevertheless it is a very close one . . . Can we say that our circumstances, our trials, our temptations are not just those which are best suited to crush our selfishness, our prides, our self-love, in fact the old Adam, the body of sin that separates us from Jesus? And if this is so, they are those best fitted to bring us to ultimate union with Him who is our life. 1

The idea of the homeliness of God, of the mystical life expressed as intimate friendship with God, is not new: it is used especially by Julian of Norwich, for example, who speaks of her 'courteous Lord' and 'His homely loving' in Revelations of Divine Love,[2] a work which is useful to a study of Stuart. Stuart, however, seems to be implying that quite ordinary events - 'our circumstances' - can lead to mystical experience, that the suffering, dark night, and sense of unity with God can arise from everyday 'trials', provided, of course, that the person involved is in the state of 'active passivity', that is, is ready to absorb the experience when it occurs, in both its anguish and its joy. The relationship between the person undergoing such an experience and the society in which he usually lives is difficult to determine. In one sense, he would be beyond it, and might be deemed to have left it; in another, he would be part of it, since the mystical state entails complete union with God and all of his creation. The situation, like that of the heroine of 'For A Dancer II', suggests that there will be some marked differences between such a mystic and his usual milieu.

These values reappear in different forms in Stuart's first three novels. In Women and God (1931) the hero, Colin, feels alienated from his domestic and spiritual life. Lourdes seems to be little more than a commercial enterprise, filled with 'religiosity, respectability, pious commercialism, hypocrisy'[3] while his farm, wife and child in Ireland

1 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 24.
2 Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love, fourth edition, edited by Grace Warrack (London, 1911) pp. 81, 10.
3 Women and God, p. 18.

produce feelings of claustrophobia. He searches for 'an escape from the isolation of loneliness . . . through religion . . . through a woman',[1] deliberately exposing himself to influences that might help him. His notion of woman is not simply sensual, but 'more than the end of physical desire . . . a deep current' in which 'one was no longer one's own law; one was part of another law.'[2] Elizabeth's miraculous cure, an experience of extreme pain and healing which combines both spiritual and sexual elements, provides the catalyst for Colin's mystical insight. Her decision to enter a convent affects him with a sense of profound, utter isolation, a despair which indicates that like Elizabeth, he has become part of 'another law', beyond his control, and that his suffering will lead to a similar mystical healing, though in a purely spiritual sense. The isolation of Frank Allen in Pigeon Irish (1932) is both physical and spiritual, however. Ireland is the last nation holding out against a dehumanised military civilisation; its chances seem slender and Allen, whom circumstances have made into the commander of Home Defence, wishes to surrender on the terms that they be allowed to set up small colonies to preserve spiritual values which might, eventually, be able to reassert themselves. In this, he is influenced by Catherine Arrigho, an adolescent girl to whom 'Ireland was the ark';[3] her job of looking after carrier-pigeons extends the identification of her with Noah and the dove, while parallels are drawn between her and the pigeons themselves, and her mystical beliefs and those of St. Catherine of Sienna. She is 'sensitive, and yet fierce . . . an air-girl', like the bird-woman of 'For A Dancer II'. Because Frank Allen joins with Catherine in her desire to preserve certain spiritual values, no matter what the cost, he is branded as a traitor, court-martialled, and

1 Women and God, p. 23.
2 Women and God, p. 23.
3 Pigeon Irish, p. 12.

receives the contempt of his wife and fellow soldiers. This is his equivalent of the desolation of Colin in Women and God (1931); from it, he proceeds with Catherine into a new life, the universal harmony of which is conveyed through a description of the new life given by 'the archangels' to the dead pigeons, with whom Frank and Catherine are identified throughout the novel. Similarly, the concentration at the end of The Coloured Dome (1932) is on Delea's own personal state and insights, in which the Republican action for which he is to be executed is forgotten. He, too, experiences a combined anguish and joy, 'an inner gloom . . . necessary in the mysterious economy of the inner life'.[1] It is a profound self-examination, 'the final sacrifice of himself, to the stripping off of all self-love, all pride',[2] a dark night of the soul to which he has opened himself because 'only in that way could the immense desire awakened within him be fulfilled'.[3] Again, the catalyst for the experience has been a woman, but 'the love and tenderness awakened within him was not for any woman'[4] since it transcends simple physical love for a more universal experience. At the end of the novel, Delea is at peace, his impending execution seeming trivial against his unity with eternal, spiritual forces, imaged as 'cold snows', 'a white radiance' and 'the translucence of eternity':[5]

> Now utterly stripped and humbled, the cold snows poured through Garry Delea's heart and he waited in this silence without impatience, sitting straight on the narrow bench. And while he waited he humbly offered himself, in that cold and peaceful holocaust, to share the little, ludicrous tragedies of the world. [6]

Here, it is made quite clear that Delea is in harmony with some

1 The Coloured Dome, p. 276.
2 The Coloured Dome, p. 276.
3 The Coloured Dome, p. 276.
4 The Coloured Dome, p. 276.
5 The Coloured Dome, p. 285.
6 The Coloured Dome, p. 287.

powerful, universal force and that he has reached this state from isolation through suffering. In his final experience, a subdued joy of acceptance transcends all fear of his impending destruction: that 'personal holocaust' is 'peaceful', since it is physical and thus cannot affect his spiritual life, and for the same reasons it is only 'little' and 'ludicrous'. The state which Delea occupies is a sort of salvation or redemption: formerly, he was isolated, cut off from his normal companions by his sense of their socialising as a 'futile round' and a 'sterile desert'.[1] His involvement with the Republican cause is an attempt to find 'a complete fulfilment of himself'[2] in which death is only a precursor to a new, much more vivid life, which he compares with a seed growing in springtime:

> that has lain underground all winter and in the spring begins to break. He did not know how it would be, but he felt that even his body would be caught into this flow and used, wounded and lacerated perhaps, as the dry bark is lacerated, by the fierce, sticky, green, slow flood of springtime. 3

The way in which the experience of suffering is expressed here is interesting. On the one hand it is a purely personal destruction, the breaking of the seed so that growth can take place, occurring because that is the natural, inherent quality of the seed. On the other hand, though, the change is imposed by some higher force, springtime, which releases and enforces the potential of the seed. So, Delea has the potential for growth but it cannot be developed until he deliberately embraces certain experiences in a way which suggests the 'conscious passivity' through which the soul of the mystic achieves enlightenment. This mystical quality is extended by the inexact allusions to Christian

1 The Coloured Dome, p. 8.
2 The Coloured Dome, p. 11.
3 The Coloured Dome, p. 8.

iconography: the wounding of Christ on the Cross; the laceration of the crown of thorns; the bark of the 'tree' on which Christ died; and the flood which destroyed all except Noah's Ark, which then becomes like a seed itself since it carried the potential for all new life. Delea's impending execution, therefore, links him with these representatives of suffering and new life and makes it redemptive, a means of personal reintegration and unity with the basic forces of life. Clearly, two basic ideas divided Stuart's work from the milieu to which it appeared to belong: the idea of a mystical, unifying experience as being the object of his heroes' searches, and the sense of solitariness, of 'outsidership', from which their search begins. Like Colin in Women and God (1931) and Frank in Pigeon Irish (1932), Delea's search is essentially a personal one, in which the outside world, whether religious, political or social, provides a set of values to escape from rather than to identify with. The experiences which they have to offer are useful only insofar as they confirm the hero's sense of his own alienation from them and his determination to find fulfilment in other ways. From this sense of isolation begins the exposure to suffering or extreme experience which eventually produces a personal reconstruction, a sense of participating in universal values, which can be characterised as a state of redemption. Orthodoxy is deliberately avoided, therefore, except as a contrast for the individuality of Stuart's views and the actions of his heroes.

This deliberate rejection of orthodox sentiments and milieu is emphasised in a poem by Stuart entitled 'From the Outcast to the Smug and Successful', published in 1932. In it, Stuart identifies himself with those 'who stand apart':

> . . . Her eyes are blue,
> But what the hell is there in that
> To comfort us who stand apart?
> We need more than poetic fancies

To comfort us, for we are wounded.
. . . But you, do you think we want your approbation
Uttered in witty aphorisms? Bah!
We'd sooner our drab depths of degradation
Than the futile, tinsel heaven where you are. 1

The poem is slight but it indicates clearly that Stuart's sympathy lay with those who were alienated from society. These outsiders are 'wounded' and as a result they do not share society's values, its 'poetic fancies'; this condition seems analagous to the sense of the futility of everyday life felt by Colin in Women and God (1931) and by Delea in The Coloured Dome (1932). The precise nature of the society which they live outside is not specified, although it is identifiable as a literary one by the phrase 'poetic fancies'. Instead, the outsider belongs in the 'drab depths of degradation', that is, with elements that are more specifically anti-social, perhaps morally beyond the pale, perhaps criminals. It is this sense of being outside society that forces the poem's narrator to reject accepted values and instead to begin to find a different basis for existence. The central characters of Women and God (1931), Pigeon Irish (1932) and The Coloured Dome (1932) extend this idea that the sense of being outcast is the condition which allows, or demands, the exploration which ends in a new-found basis for living. The idea of the outcast is important for Stuart's novels generally as well as showing his lack of identification with his contemporary literary milieu. In almost every case, the central figure is either outcast or obliged to make himself so in order to get profounder insights. In The Pillar of Cloud (1948), for example, the hero, Dominic, has deliberately left his comfortable home in Ireland to experience the deprivation and isolation of war-time Germany because he

1 Francis Stuart, 'The Outcasts to the Smug and Successful', Motley: The Dublin Gate Theatre Magazine, 1, no. 5 (October, 1932), 4.
2 Francis Stuart, The Pillar of Cloud (London: Victor Gollancz, 1948; reprinted London: Martin, Brian & O'Keefe, 1974). All references are to the reprinted, 1974, edition.

believes that by participating in it he will gain some profound insight. The spiritual sterility of Simeon Grimes, an aging painter, in The High Consistory (1981) is symbolised by his sexual impotence; he suffers from a complacency and unwillingness to question accepted values which is fatal to the sort of creative art in which he believes. He is obliged to remove himself beyond the bounds of social conventions, and to re-find a fellow-feeling with other outcasts, before he regains sexual potency and before he finds the redemptive insight vital for spiritual and artistic wholeness.

Although the idea of the outcast is important to Stuart's work it is not unique to it, and it is necessary to ask how his outcast compares with similar figures used by other writers. One approach to this question, limited but nevertheless useful, is provided by Colin Wilson's examination of alienation in literature, The Outsider (1956),[1] in which he considers both the nature of the Outsider and the difficulties of writing about his condition. First, Wilson suggests that the alienated hero whom he calls the 'Outsider' is a recurring figure both in fiction and in real life, and that his peculiar world-vision enables him, perhaps obliges him, to see through surface reality, and thus produces in him the conviction that the world is meaningless. Within that meaningless world the outsider must find a higher reality, a reality which will free him from his sense of meaninglessness and thus give him reasons to continue living. There is a high penalty for not finding this higher reality, Wilson suggests: van Gogh's suicide, the ballet-dancer Nijinsky's madness, or the 'mental suicide' of T. E. Lawrence,

1 Colin Wilson, The Outsider (London, 1956). The usefulness of this work lies in its broad approach to its enquiry which other similar works rarely achieve; for example, Maurice Friedman, Problematic Rebel, revised edition, (Chicago, 1970) deals with the paradoxical nature of the hero in the work of specific authors - Melville, Dostoyevsky, Kafka and Camus - a focus which lessens its usefulness in this context.

who joined the R.A.F. to involve himself with 'the ignorant, the deceived, the superficial'.[1] According to Wilson, these three outsiders were doomed because in trying to find a way of ceasing to be outsiders, they 'went back' instead of pushing forward to the higher reality which would have been their salvation.

The way to salvation, he suggests, lies ultimately 'in extremes', in experiences which jolt the outsider out of his usual perception of the world as essentially unreal, or dissociated from him; thus, 'the idea of a way out often comes in "visions", moments of intensity'.[2] Further:

> release, if it comes, involves a complete retracing of the steps through the human ground; back to the essential Will to live that underlies all existence. And this recognition of the world's unreality, this insight that comes between death and morning, brings a certainty in its wake. It is naked insight into the purpose of the force that demands life at all costs. This insight is called mysticism. 3

The visionary experience of the life-force that can save the outsider from his overwhelming sense of futility is usually dependent on external stimuli. Wilson concludes, therefore, that the outsider must find some way of developing the visionary faculty and integrating intellectual, emotional and physical forces, not in order to relinquish his pessimistic, anti-humanistic philosophy but in order to accept it and withstand the spiritual pain that acceptance involves. There are objections to Wilson's engagingly provocative argument. Its scope is limited by its emphasis on the philosophy of Nietzsche; it ignores the work of Samuel Beckett and that of the Romantic poets except for

1 The Outsider, p. 81.
2 The Outsider, p. 202.
3 The Outsider, p. 187.

Keats;[1] and it fails to discuss the problems of outsidership in the wider contexts of myth and literature and is, therefore, both derivative and divisive and open to charges such as that of Maurice Friedman that 'those either-ors that divide mankind into simple classes or groups are essentially alien to it . . . a depth-image of modern man can be reached only on the far side of such easy oppositions as "average man" and "superman", "insider" and "outsider"'.[2] On the other hand, Wilson's and Friedman's books are useful reminders that the condition of alienation is not just a literary device but a psychological state which is central to the concerns of modern literature. As well, in spite of its academic limitations, the imaginative scope of The Outsider is suggestive and helpful in this case. The notion of the need to push the self into a different, mystical insight, which produces integration with 'the force that demands life at all costs' is clearly relevant to Stuart's idea of redemption achieved through extreme experience. Further, it indicates the difficulty of writing about the peculiar interior states and world view of outsiders and implies qualitative critical values by which writing of that sort may be judged, by attributing success in it to authors such as Dostoyevsky, Camus, Sartre, Joyce and Eliot. Literary arbitration is not Wilson's main purpose, though, and on its own, of course, The Outsider is not an adequate validation of Stuart's work. However, it does indicate the difficulty of the theme with which Stuart is concerned and the sorts of problems with which he engages at

1 Wilson suggests that Keats was 'normal and socially well-adjusted' and that he 'lacked anything that could be pitched on as disease or nervous disability'; (p. 14). While accepting that Wilson's purpose here is to 'rid ourselves of the temptation to identify the Outsider with the artist' (p. 14) his example does not seem a happy one, given the circumstances of Keats's life, the madly jealous tone of his letters to Fanny Braun, and lines of verse such as 'I saw too distinct into the core/ Of an eternal, fierce destruction', John Keats, 'To J. H. Reynolds, Esq.', Poetical Works, edited by H. W. Garrod, Oxford Standard Authors (London, 1956) p. 381-383 (p. 383). The poem is one to which Stuart has paid some attention.

2 Problematic Rebel, p. 3.

the outset of his career and thus provides important elements in substantiating the claim that Stuart's work merits re-assessment. As well, attention is directed to areas important in a consideration of Stuart's work, by Wilson's description of the problems involved in writing about the outsider:

> The writer has an instinct that makes him select the material that will make the best show on paper, and when that has failed or been carried to a limit from which he finds it difficult to go forward, he selects a new approach . . . beyond a certain point, the Outsider's problems will not submit to mere thought; they must be lived. Very few writers treat writing . . . as an instrument for living, not as an aim in itself. 1

> [the Outsider's problem of personal identity] calls for detailed psychological analysis; for an exactitude of language for which there is no precedent in modern literature (if we except the poetry of Mr. Eliot, especially the 'Four Quartets', and certain passages in Joyce's Ulysses). It is a subject which is full of pitfalls for the understanding. And writing about it drives home the fact that our language has become a tired and inefficient thing in the hands of journalists and writers who have nothing to say. 2

Wilson suggests here that the first problem lies in the nature of the writer's instinct or, to be more precise, in the moral and artistic code which guides the writer. This code, or aesthetic, is fundamental and dynamic; it 'makes him select the material' and when its boundaries have been reached it is obliged to develop since 'he selects a new approach'. The act of writing is an integral part of the life of the author who concerns himself with the outcast's predicament since it 'will not submit to mere thought'. The implications of this are, firstly, that the relationship between the biography of such an author and his work merits close attention; and secondly, that for an author to participate in the problems of the outsider and to communicate them, he must find some solution to them. Wilson's notion that the destruction of van

1 The Outsider, p. 70.
2 The Outsider, p. 147.

Gogh, Nijinsky and T. E. Lawrence stemmed from their refusal to face their essential dilemma comes into play here: since the outcast's problems 'must be lived' by the author he must solve them if he is not to be destroyed as well. Finally, Wilson raises the question of an appropriate style and form for communicating such experiences. Both the peculiar, annihilating world-vision of the outsider and the mystical insight necessary for his survival, require 'an exactitude of language' which, he suggests, is not normally found. There is, therefore, a demand for an originality in writing which, presumably, will develop with the author's perception of the outsider's predicament and potential.

Both the nature of Stuart's outcast hero and the difficulty of writing about his reintegrative experiences have produced comment from critics. An analysis of Stuart's religious values indicates that Stuart's outcast, like Wilson's outsider, has a high degree of self-determination:

> Stuart's sympathies unquestionably lie with the abandoned, the morally and physically weak, the victims of callous exploitation and historical inevitability . . . the issues of merited and unmerited suffering and the absurdity of wrestling with malevolant mysterious forces . . .
>
> To leave an impression of hopeless pessimism would, however, be a gross misrepresentation of Stuart's vision. If society's structures and institutions are inimical to justice and foster conditions for widespread unhappiness, there remains one perennial source of hope which stoutly transcends the pervasiveness of evil. At the risk of oversimplifying Stuart's nuanced treatment, one might designate it as the indomitability of the human spirit. The weak and powerless may be down, but they are not out: the prospects for success, prestige, healing and rehabilitation may be grim but no authority or power can suppress the spark of a meaningful Weltanschauung which enables the victims to preserve their dignity and create human, moral and religious values. Nor is it merely the author's implied intimation that the weak are saved in some grand cosmic framework: the characters themselves consciously and explicitly, in their words and actions, understand what authentic selfhood requires them to do; in the last analysis destiny and meaningfulness are in their own hands. 1

1 Fr. Paul Lennon, 'Religious Values in the Novels of Francis Stuart', Milltown Studies, 2 (1978), 11-23 (p. 15-18).

Roger Garfitt points to the difficulty of communicating that 'destiny and meaningfulness'. Taking Pigeon Irish (1932) as typical of Stuart's work he suggests that:

> Almost all subsequent Stuart novels focus on the establishment of a small, informal community, but enshrining the understanding, more instinctive than intellectual, of a new way of life. The fundamental experience uniting the communities is, again, destitution, the necessity of which, as a prerequisite for any sort of understanding or communion, is already hinted at in Pigeon Irish. 1

Garfitt defines 'destitution' as a 'condition of total loss . . . "an inner stripping bare"'[2] and sees the reintegration eventually achieved as 'a continuity of action between the smallest action and deepest impulse, so that transcendence can give way to immanence':[3]

> It is not that the Gospels present a revealed truth, to which reality must match up, but that the Gospels have entered reality. In other words, religious truth is not an external frame of reference, but an energy felt within the current of the world. 4

The difficulty, though, lies in communicating this; Garfitt suggests that in Stuart's novels:

> his imagination carries him only to a perception of what a new way of life might be, and no further. Each of his communities was only at the foundation stage: its brief life might even be said to depend upon a sense of inevitable terminus, upon the suspension in crisis of the world outside. To ask more than this, though, is to ask literature to go beyond life, and at this point language ceases. 5

The creation of 'human, moral and religious values' and the way in which

1 Roger Garfitt, 'Constants in Contemporary Irish Fiction', in Two Decades of Irish Writing, edited by Douglas Dunn (Cheadle, 1979) pp. 207-241 (p. 211-12).
2 'Constants in Contemporary Irish Fiction', p. 211.
3 'Constants in Contemporary Irish Fiction', p. 212.
4 'Constants in Contemporary Irish Fiction', p. 217.
5 'Constants in Contemporary Irish Fiction', p. 218.

that is communicated provides an appropriate focus for an inquiry into redemption in Stuart's work. To place this in perspective, and to provide a background for more detailed discussion, a brief appreciation of certain basic issues is necessary, however: these must include questions about the nature of Stuart's aesthetics; the themes used in his work and how they are related to each other; the part played by recurring symbols or motifs in his work; the relationship between his life and his fiction; and the way these elements are developed in the style and form of his work.

* * * * * * *

It has been suggested so far that the philosophical point of view from which Stuart writes, the beliefs and ideas which might be termed his aesthetics, is essentially mystical. Julian of Norwich's [1] Revelations of Divine Love is quoted from in Women and God (1931); Pigeon Irish (1932) contains extensive references to Catherine of Sienna, while Ste. Thérèse of Lisieux and Bernadette of Lourdes are referred to elsewhere in his work. Their importance to him lies in their isolation from the conventional world through their visionary experiences, even though, like Ste. Thérèse, they may be competent in worldly matters. He goes on to associate, by implication, this isolation with the extreme, unconventional mental states of certain writers. In [2] Black List, Section H (1971) for example, H reads first of all the lives of certain artists and then the mystics, looking for some common, revelatory message:

the story of Keats receiving a letter from Fanny at his lodgings in the

1 Woman and God, p. 250.
2 Francis Stuart, Black List, Section H (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1971; London: Martin, Brian & O'Keefe, 1975; Penguin Books, 1983). 'The Books of Francis Stuart', p. 54 and Francis Stuart, p. 87 incorrectly include Southern Illinois University's publishers' representatives, Feffer and Simon, in their publication details, as publishers of the London edition. References throughout are to the London, 1975 edition.

Piazza di Spagna in Rome in the winter of 1792 and handing it unopened to Severn to place beside him in the coffin. There was Dostoevsky as he waited his turn at the stake in Semyenovsky Square, Petersburg, on a winter morning in 1849; van Gogh sitting in a hired carriage taking him from the asylum at Saint Rémy on a farewell visit to a girl in a brothel at Arles. . .

He read everything about them he could lay his hands on with feverish intensity and a kind of impatience as though looking for a particular message. And in several cases he came on what he'd subconsciously expected, experiencing an almost unbearable excitment, and believing himself on the verge of a vital revelation that he was not yet quite ripe for.

From these he turned to the mystics . . . Soon he was absorbed by states of mind that appealed to him first because they ran counter to the familiar ones. He began to put his whole heart into trying to share this kind of consciousness. 1

Spiritual values are not a separate issue in Stuart's work, therefore, but are linked with the theme of isolation, the importance of unusual states of mind, and a personal reconstruction which is a shared experience, shared here by H with the people about whom he reads. In each case he focuses on them at the moment of greatest intensity: Keats's acceptance of his impending death, Dostoyevsky's expectation of execution in a few moments, van Gogh's last journey to the object of his passion. The implication is that they are isolated from all else, by the concentrated nature of the experience, that they were suffering acutely, and that because of this, these are somehow moments of insight similar to those experienced by the mystics. The exact nature of the insight afforded, and its consequences, are not indicated; like Delea waiting for execution in The Coloured Dome (1932), however, it might be assumed to be an insight into the heart of things, a moment of understanding such as that which, at the end of Black List, Section H (1971), H seeks in the prison cell where he has been isolated for an unspecified period of time:

he did begin to see the silence that he had entered as the deep divide

1 Black List, Section H, p. 130-1.

between the past and what was still to come. Whatever it was that was at the other end there was no way of telling. It might be a howl of final despair or the profound silence might be broken by certain words that he didn't yet know how to listen for. 1

Here, as elsewhere, Stuart is concerned with first of all penetrating what Wilson calls 'the purpose of the force that demands life at all costs', the source of mystical experience, and then coming to terms with it in some way which will produce fruitful insight.

This notion informs the themes which recur in Stuart's work. Isolation and reintegration are a basic part of the progress of his hero: in The Coloured Dome (1932) for instance, Delea's movement is from an interior sense of alienation from society, eventually made exterior by his imprisonment, to a profound sense of integration, a sharing which fulfils 'the immense desire awakened within him'.[2] Similarly, in Black List, Section H (1971) H comes to realise that the isolation and silence of his cell might lead to the insights for which he has searched throughout the novel, the 'certain words that he didn't know how to listen for'. Interestingly, though, as Roger Garfitt points out, the experience is one of immanence rather than transcendence: Delea's object is to be part of 'the little, ludicrous tragedies of the world'[3] and H's purpose is to find some fruitful way of pursuing both life and his art. This sense of the interlinking of the spiritual and the mundane is made especially clear in Pigeon Irish (1932), where the community which Catherine and Frank leave to set up is a physical representative of the spiritual values they hold. Elsewhere, the theme appears rather differently: in The Chariot (1953), for example, simple domestic activities are emblematic of a deeper fulfilment to Mrs. Darnell, who is bed-ridden:

1 Black List, Section H, p. 425.
2 The Coloured Dome, p. 276.
3 The Coloured Dome, p. 287.

to have a bed by the cooker would mean sharing the stir and bustle of meal-making. There would be the comfortable trickle of steam from a simmering pot, the changing lustre on a kettle as the metal grew hot, all the tiny, beautiful intimations of homeliness right beside her. 1

Complementary to the theme of spirituality and the mundane is that of sacred and profane love. In his earlier work Stuart sees the two sorts of love as complementary but separate: in Women and God (1931) for example, the only love which Elizabeth can give Frank is essentially spiritual:

A generous love, that would always inspire him, enwrapping him in a flame, a solitary love, like an icy flame that would never scorch the body. The body that, like a sword, must separate them. An unchanging love that would not blossom into flesh and would not wither. 2

Through this paradoxical 'icy flame' which enwraps the body but does not make contact with it, Stuart keeps sacred and sensual love separated, though dependent on each other. In his later work, however, they become more closely allied, the experience of physical love leading to an awareness of some deeper, more vital experience. In Black List, Section H (1971), therefore, one of H's fictional heroes, X, conceives the relationship between physical and spiritual love in these terms:

For X, existence had always only been separated from a state of nearly insupportable sensation by the fragile but tightly knit fabric of the material world. Wherever this wore thin he felt in danger of being exposed to one of the varying degrees of horror that it normally veiled. But there were areas behind the physical curtain where the exposure was to rapture, and the way to the commonest of these was between the couple of loose, stretchable stitches that had been left in that part of the fabric that constituted the body of a woman. 3

Here, physical love is a direct path to a spiritual experience, an

1 Francis Stuart, The Chariot (London, 1953), p. 29.
2 Women and God, p. 224-5.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 220.

exposure to rapture that is somehow beyond the 'tightly knit fabric of the material world'. It has the quality of immanence, of the interpenetration of a heightened spiritual state with the ordinary world which characterises the redemptive state. So, later in the novel, this imaginative realisation becomes reality for H when he meets Halka Witebsk with whom intercourse is 'spiritual-sensual, sacred-obscene, complete as never before'.[1] This sort of experience and understanding is not automatic; Stuart discriminates clearly between the sort of attitudes that can lead to the redemptive state and those which cannot. In Things To Live For (1934),[2] for example, he states that:

> It is only through opening one's arms to life that one will find the ultimate peace and security. Only through suffering and loving. There is no short-cut. Protecting oneself against life is not peace but death. Of all the strange varied people I have met it has not been the sinners, the degraded, the drunkards, the gamblers, the crooks, the harlots who have made me shudder, but the dead, the respectable dead; cut off like a branch from the tree. 3

The 'respectable dead' are respectable because their attitude to life is one of moderation and social conformity; for the same reason, they are dead. The gambler and the businessman are set in opposition to each other here, as elsewhere in Stuart's work, by the willingness of the one to take certain risks which might lead to new insights, and the desire of the other for security. Gambling, therefore, becomes a way of pushing the self into an involvement with risk, which may bring suffering, but which is the source of 'the ultimate peace and security'. Similarly, for H in Black List, Section H (1971), horse-racing provides 'a substitute for the more vital risks that he didn't yet know how to

1 Black List, Section H, p. 416.
2 Francis Stuart, Things To Live For: Notes for an Autobiography (London, 1934).
3 Things To Live For, p. 11-12.

take';[1] at the end of the novel he hazards everything for the insight which might be only a sense of unalterable desolation - 'a howl of final despair' - or might be the enlightenment, the 'certain words', for which he searches. Linked with the theme of gambler and businessman, therefore, is that of mystic and criminal. For Stuart, gambling is an approximation to mysticism, since it involves the same total commitment, chance and potential suffering. The same is true of criminality: like the mystic, the criminal is isolated from society by a different sense of values, which work against those of the businessman and the 'respectable dead'. The values and experience associated with the redemptive state are unconventional ones, and it is likely, therefore, that the hero will put himself beyond the socially-acceptable moral pale: Arrigho, in Pigeon Irish (1932), for example, is regarded as a traitor, and Sugrue's relationship with Herra in Memorial (1973) and Grimes's intercourse with a young girl about to join a Carmelite order, in The High Consistory (1981) are clearly outside the social norm. It is not the criminal acts themselves that Stuart values but the spirit that produces them. In Julie (1938)[2] the hero, Goldberg, defrauds insurance companies by committing arson on his own, overinsured property. These actions, Stuart suggests, are less criminal than those of the respectable businessman. Goldberg says:

> "I'm a benefactor of society compared to most factory owners, big store owners. I don't defraud the poor and squeeze the last ounce out of them. I go for the rich . . . for the Insurance companies and for the banks."[3]

He is motivated, though, not by cynicism but by a 'passion for life' and a 'hidden intensity'[4] and it is this which justifies his actions,

1 Black List, Section H, p.225.
2 Francis Stuart, Julie (London, 1938).
3 Julie, p. 116.
4 Julie, p. 288.

against the deathly 'drab court' and 'rows of grey faces'[1] that sentence him. Stuart suggests too that it is just such an intensity which separates the artist from the ordinary man. In Julie (1936) he says:

'To be a writer isn't just a profession at which one is either competent or not. It's the dedication of one's life to something that swallows you up. Like being a priest, only the rules are of course different . . . You've got to have an infinite sympathy and therefore go through almost infinite suffering.' 2

The division between artist and man here is the same as that made in Things To Live For (1934) between those with a total commitment to living and pushing themselves on to the deepest possible experience and those who are the 'respectable dead', who have protected themselves against the richness and suffering of life.

There is, therefore, a certain harmony in the themes which Stuart uses in his work, and this is extended by the use of recurring symbols

and motifs. One example of this occurs in Redemption (1949) when the hero, Ezra, re-meets Margareta, whom he believed died in an air-raid in Germany:

"I wasn't dead, though. I hadn't got home that night when the raid came. I was in another cellar and we were buried and something was broken in me. I was brought to a hospital outside the city, then to another far away and they told me there was no post any more. You see how I am, I am all out of joint and hideous. I can only crawl and hop. I'm not nice to sleep with now; it's like sleeping with an old carthorse."

"My God, sleeping, what's that?" he said, "We don't need it, Hare. Nothing do I need but your dirty little paw like this. That's consummation and salvation."

"What long words! Anyhow, you can have other girls; only let me stay near you."

"Little fool," he said, "don't you know that this is a new day? This is a new life, a kind of resurrection!" 4

1 Julie, p. 159.
2 Julie, p. 201.
3 Francis Stuart, Redemption (London: Victor Gollancz, 1949; reprinted London: Martin, Brian & O'Keefe, 1974). All references are to the reprinted, 1974 edition.
4 Redemption, p. 172-3.

Certain themes are apparent. Ezra's 'consummation and salvation' is found through Margareta; their relationship transcends sexuality, however, for they are united on a spiritual plane in which the only experience of physical love that is required is simple contact - 'your dirty little paw like this'. Profane love takes on a sacred aspect here, therefore. The theme of isolation and reintegration is raised by the isolation and suffering which has come before this experience; further, the linking of spirituality with the mundane is made by Margreta's expression of her new happiness in simple, personal terms - 'let me stay near you'. The terms in which these themes are expressed are important. Because Margareta is disfigured her sexual status has been altered and this obliges her and Ezra to redefine the nature of their relationship. Her crippling is not a mark of sterility - intercourse is still possible - but a mark of increased spiritual strength which allows them to find redemption. Some sort of unusual physical state, if not actual disfigurement, often occurs in Stuart's heroines, who are marked off by it from the conventional women in his novels: Alyse, in The Flowering Cross (1950)[1] is blind, for example, and Herra in Memorial (1973) has scars on her wrists which suppurate when she is distressed. In this passage, though, the motif of disfigurement is associated with that of a 'woman-Christ'. Margareta's experiences constitute a sort of Passion: she has been 'buried' - later in the novel she describes her condition as 'spreadeagled like one crucified'[2] - 'broken' and undergone a 'resurrection' into a changed physical and spiritual state. Through this suffering she has brought a 'new life' to Ezra, a spiritual healing which is shared and mutual. This unusual motif, which may owe something to Julian of Norwich's idea

1 Francis Stuart, The Flowering Cross (London, 1950).
2 Redemption, p. 225.

of a 'mother-God',[1] is used frequently by Stuart, most obviously in the angel-prostitute Sonia in The Angel of Pity (1935).[2] The motif of woman as a spiritual healer is sometimes associated with that of the hare, as it is here. Ezra's pet-name for Margareta is 'hare' and it provides a link between her lost sexual status - she can only 'crawl and hop' - and the changed significance of Ezra's physical contact with her 'dirty little paw'. Similarly, the heroine of Memorial (1973),[3] Herra, is described as 'my bold and timid hare in heat' conjoining woman, hare and sexuality. The hare motif has especial significance in Stuart's work, since by drawing on its traditional associations and using carefully controlled synecdoche, he associates it with his major preoccupations with isolation and reintegration.

The reappearance of Margareta in Redemption (1949) provides the stimulus for the formation of a small community in which the new-found insights can be nurtured, an action which is often associated with the prototype of the small community cut off from conventional society, the ark motif. In Pigeon Irish (1932), the community which Catherine and Arrigho wish to form is seen as an ark, with Catherine as 'Catherine Noah'[4] while in Memorial (1973)[5] the flat to which Sugrue and Herra retreat is called an ark. The ark motif sums up the precariousness, the potential for new life, the isolation and the intimacy of the redemptive state, as well as emphasising its unusual use of conventional religious belief.

Often associated with the community and acting as a symbol of its new life is the action of creating a garden from the wilderness. Claire and Grimes, in The High Consistory (1981) for example, tend a small

1 Revelations of Divine Love, p. 141-159.
2 Francis Stuart, The Angel of Pity (London, 1935).
3 Memorial, p. 195.
4 Pigeon Irish, p. 57.
5 Memorial, p. 52.

garden in which are 'cabbage plants whose outer leaves had hung limp, turned yellow and shrivelled, but now tiny green ones sprouted from the centre like the new, sure brush strokes on the canvas'[1] an image that brings together Grimes's new lease of sexual and artistic life. In Good Friday's Daughter (1952), too, the mental effort which Mark has to put into writing his book is paralleled by the physical effort required to irrigate dry land to make a garden, to make 'a fine, smooth lawn where the rank weeds had been an eyesore'.[2]

Unusual states of mind, of a certain kind, are a necessary part of the insights which lead to redemption, therefore. Stuart is concerned neither with mental illness, in which the subject is overtaken unwillingly by madness, nor with the process in which uncontrolled madness is deliberately induced in the hope that some new creative experience may emerge, a condition of the sort advocated in Rimbaud's suggestion that 'Le Poète se fait voyant par un long, immense et raisonné dérèglement de tous les sens'.[3] Rather, he focuses on the deliberate exposure of the self to extremely painful or unusual circumstances, which he believes will induce a controlled mental state in which a very definite experience will be found. In The Pillar of Cloud (1948), for instance, Dominic deliberately exchanges a comfortable home in Ireland for the deprivation of war-time Berlin to try to find certain insights. This element of perverseness, which is clearly linked with the theme of mystic and criminal, appears in the motif of delinquency, which in a sense, is the mental equivalent of the

1 The High Consistory, p. 226.
2 Francis Stuart, Good Friday's Daughter (London, 1952), p. 169.
3 Arthur Rimbaud, Oeuvres Complètes, introduced by Antoine Adam (Bruges, 1979), p. 251: 'The Poet makes himself a seer by a long, gigantic and rational derangement of the senses'. Similar conditions have been sought by other writers through the use of hallucinogenic drugs; Wilson describes his experience of mescalin as making him 'ecstatically happy - and also helpless and defenceless': The Outsider, Postscript to the London, 1967 edition.

individuality conferred by disfigurement. Herra, in Memorial (1973) is 'My delinquent, teenage Mary M'[1] for example, since the liason between a schoolgirl and an elderly man is socially unacceptable, although her teenage sexuality is the agent of their redemptive insights. Herra carries stigmata-like scars on her wrists, from a suicide attempt, which suppurate when her sensitivity to suffering is aroused and which are a physical representation of her delinquency, uniting that motif with disfigurement and both with the idea of a 'woman-Christ' which also exists in the special significance given to Mary Magdalene - 'Mary M' - in the novel.

* * * * * * *

Two issues are raised by this brief consideration of Stuart's aesthetics, themes and use of motif: the relationship between his life and his work, and the way in which he communicates the experiences with which he is concerned. The first question is the most difficult to resolve because of the lack of an authoritative account of Stuart's life to compare with his fiction. The problem is exacerbated by the question of what such a comparison would hope to find, whether simple factual parallels of place and person, or a set of shared beliefs and standards which could be proven to exist in Stuart's life as well as in his fiction. How such beliefs could be identified and verified presents another difficulty. On the other hand, the question cannot be ignored because it is problematical. Stuart's idea of the nature of the artist as demanding a total commitment to pushing the self to extreme experience requires a consideration of the relationship between his biography and his fiction. The sub-title of one of his works, Things To Live For (1934) is 'Notes for an Autobiography', which directs attention

1 Memorial, p. 195.

to his life, as does his description of Black List, Section H (1971) as 'an imaginative fiction in which only real people appear and under their actual names where possible'.[1] His use of places in which he is known to have lived as settings for his novels encourages further inquiry into this area - Glendalough in Pigeon Irish (1932) and The Great Squire (1939),[2] for instance, or war-time Germany in The Pillar of Cloud (1948), Victors and Vanquished (1959),[3] Black List, Section H (1971) and The High Consistory (1981). The extent to which Stuart's life and work are interdependent and the implications of such interdependence, requires some investigation, therefore.

Since Stuart is concerned with the way in which mystical insight can arise from experiences of the mundane world, he is obliged to find ways in which this can be communicated. In Women and God (1931) he does this by quoting directly from a vision of Julian of Norwich to describe Colin's final insight, while in The Coloured Dome (1932) he uses rich natural imagery, of snow and spring, to describe Delea's understanding of the relationship between physical death and spiritual life. As Roger Garfitt says, the problem is that communicating such experiences is requiring literature 'to go beyond life, and at this point language ceases'. Throughout his work, however, Stuart remakes his style with a remarkable insistence and subtlety, to explore the meridian between reality and inspiration. This is especially evident in The High Consistory (1981):

> I paint what I see, and then I only see what I paint. A point comes when, if all goes well, I no longer look at the sitter, still life or whatever is there, but, concentrating on the canvas, distort what I've done to give it a chance to reflect some of the truth about the subject that I'd missed by direct observation.

1 Black List, Section H, dustjacket inside front.
2 Francis Stuart, The Great Squire, (London, 1939).
3 Francis Stuart, Victors and Vanquished, (London, 1958).

I supposed this approach would work (it requires every time an act of faith) in writing these diaries and reports. A few are entirely factual, or undistorted, and others move from fact to fantasy or vice versa. The episodes related in this and the following chapter are very much of this latter kind. The transition here, as in my painting, from putting down exactly what I saw, or what happened, to imaginatively exploring the appearance or fact for hidden signs and signals is, perhaps, hard to pin-point. 1

What is important here is the intermingling of the thing perceived - 'what I see' - the recording of it - 'I paint' - and the modification of the thing perceived by not only its recording but the actual perceptive process - 'I paint what I see'. This construct of whatever was perceived originally then becomes the reality, with the thing itself being totally lost - 'and then I only see what I paint'. This, in essence, is the 'psychological analysis' and 'exactitude of language' for which Wilson called, an exactitude which, paradoxically, reveals the imprecision of the perceptive process and suggests that, finally, man's apprehension is unquantifiable since the process of communicating the thing apprehended is so open to distortion. Ultimately, not only is it hard to pin-point the transition from fact to fantasy but the two are both valid ways of finding the truth about the thing perceived. This underlines the significance of the imagination as the faculty best equipped to explore the other possible aspects of the thing perceived from which just one aspect has been selected by the perceiver to be the 'truth' - 'I . . . distort what I've done to give it a chance to reflect some of the truth about the subject that I'd missed by direct observation'. The relationship between imagination and reality is mystical in the sense that it leads to a truth which is greater than its constituent parts, a higher reality. Since the outsider-observer is active in its production, he is necessarily part of it and the higher reality he finds is an expression of unity with ultimate truth, the

1 The High Consistory, p. 39.

reintegration or redemption which he seeks.

The tendency towards patterning and unity in Stuart's work which is evident in his use and development of certain themes and motifs is accentuated by the way in which some novels, in effect, fall into pairs or small groups. Pigeon Irish (1932) and The Coloured Dome (1932) are linked, although not in too exact a way, by their common background of Ireland as the last outpost of spiritual values in a Europe defeated by some great power. The bombing of 'Headquarters' projected in Pigeon Irish (1932) has already taken place in The Coloured Dome (1932);[1] a Commandant Malone is shot dead in Pigeon Irish (1932) but a similar figure reemerges in General Malone in The Coloured Dome (1932).[2] There are less extensive parallels in other novels: Try The Sky (1933) and Glory (1933) are linked by their use of the aeroplane as a symbol of both freedom and destruction and as a device to bring together widely separated settings; and The Bridge (1937)[3] and Julie (1938) are both concerned with women struggling to free themselves of the conventions of the society which suffocates them. Although The Pillar of Cloud (1948) is set in Berlin and Redemption (1949) in Ireland, both focus on the horror of war and its physical and spiritual destructiveness; both Dominic in The Pillar of Cloud (1948) and Ezra in Redemption (1949) must find some personal, re-integrative understanding to set against that holocaust.

A certain richness and depth is gained through this process, since the one novel provides a different view point for the concerns of the other. A similar effect is gained by a less obvious form of cross-referencing in his work, where an incident in an earlier novel may be reused, in a rather different form. For example, the careless

1 Pigeon Irish, p. 230; The Coloured Dome, p. 17.
2 Pigeon Irish, p. 265; The Coloured Dome, p. 121.
3 Francis Stuart, The Bridge (London, 1937).

slatternliness of Nancy in Redemption (1948) adjusts our view of Veronique in The Pilgrimage (1955),[1] of Leonore in Victors and Vanquished (1958) and finally of Iseult in Black List, Section H (1971). Nancy's general carelessness is described at length in Redemption (1949); Veronique's habit of stubbing out cigarettes on the underneath of tables and leaving them there is described in The Pilgrimage (1955); in Black List, Section H (1971), therefore, only two sentences are needed to sum up H's revulsion and hopelessness in the face of Iseult's filthy habits:

> The dust, when he ran a finger along a windowsill, lay thick, cigarette butts sprouted in clammy clusters from the underside of tables, and when he couldn't help taking a look under the bathtub it depressed him to see the various discarded bits of filth Iseult had kicked out of the way. These he recognized as signs of the apathy that was growing within. 2

The economy of the last description is possible because of its associations with the earlier incidents, producing on the one hand a delicate, stylised 'shorthand' and on the other hand an expanded significance for the incident.

These realistic details have a symbolic value, as well. Iseult's carelessness is an index of her spiritual sterility, as, in The Chariot (1953), Mrs. Darnell's appreciation of the value of domestic minutiae indicates her spiritual potential. Similarly, the bifteck tartar which H orders in Vienna, and by which Iseult is repelled, becomes not only another exotic fragment of his memories of the city, but also a dividing line between Iseult and himself, a symbol of self-reliance and self-expression, and when the dish is prepared by Simeon Grimes in The High Consistory (1981) it is, by association, imbued with the same spirit.

1 Francis Stuart, The Pilgrimage (London, 1955).
2 Black List, Section H, p. 181.

Stuart's exploration of different sorts of realities produces some interesting and unusual experiments with form and style. Pigeon Irish (1932) uses a sort of chorus or commentary on the main action in the form of conversations between three homing pigeons, for example. Black List, Section H (1971), too, uses a variety of names for its hero - H, Harry, Luke Ruark, are the most frequently used - changing from one to the other in an organised but unexpected way. Memorial (1973) intermingles fact and fantasy; some of Sugrue's experiences take place 'not on the factual level, but in my anxious imagination'[1] while A Hole in the Head (1977)[2] makes no distinction, for the reader, between Shane's hallucinations and events belonging to the 'real' world. This exploration of the interdependence of imagination and reality is a central concern of The High Consistory (1981). There, not only does language intermingle them, so that one refines and redefines the other, but also the narrative structure re-presents events out of chronological order, so that an early episode counterpoints a later one in a way which is difficult in strict chronology. The intention is to produce a narrative that is 'shuffled . . . as is the past, more thoroughly and repeatedly, by memory'[3] and through this, to suggest the essential interrelatedness of certain events that are separated in time. This move towards a unity of experience of real and fictional people such as Thérèse of Lisieux, van Gogh, Katusha in Tolstoy's Resurrection and Grushenka in Dostoyevsky's The Brothers Karamazov suggests a coherence of experience in the characters of The High Consistory (1981), a common potential for the redemptive experience. Remarkably, and ambitiously, the novel also acts as a summation of the concerns of the rest of his corpus. This is implicit in his use of theme and motif common to all of his work, but is made more deliberate by his invoking of settings such

1 Memorial, p. 47.
2 Francis Stuart, A Hole in the Head (London, 1977).
3 The High Consistory, p. 7-8.

as war-time Berlin and Glendalough; by reference to the hero's wife whose name, Iseult, suggests Iseult in Black List, Section H (1972) and the other slatternly women she is connected with; by using incidents and episodes which link the biography of his hero with that of H and the narrator of Things To Live For (1934); and by using certain distinctive phrases that occur in other novels - for example, 'I knew we were on the wing' in The High Consistory (1981) recalls the phrase 'Now I am on the wing', from Try the Sky (1933) where it is quoted from Tolstoy's The Death of Ivan Iliich.[1]

The overall movement of Stuart's work, then, is towards finding a personal integration with certain absolute, universal powers, through suffering and extreme experience. His central characters begin this process as outcast, cut off from respectable society, and with closer affiliations to the criminal than to the businessman. They end it, though, with a perception of a universal unity which is essentially mystical and transcendent but which finds expression in simple, everyday tasks shared in a sense of communality. Gambling and risk taking are a way of finding direction and anticipating some of the qualities of the suffering associated with this experience, but the final insight is to be found most frequently through contact with woman, whose redemptive potency links sacred and profane love. This idea of redemption is developed coherently throughout Stuart's work, in his use of certain themes and motifs and in an especial concentration on experimentation with form and style. It is most conveniently studied, therefore, by first examining the way in which this idea developed in his earliest writing and then by examining a representative selection of novels and focusing through them on Stuart's major concerns, while at the same time preserving the wider frame of reference by providing further useful

1 The High Consistory, p. 139; Try The Sky, p. 181.

or substantiating examples from elsewhere in his work. The novels which will be referred to most frequently are those given below; before beginning this examination, however, it is necessary to consider some of the special problems associated with reading Stuart's work.[1]

PROBLEMS

The first problem associated with reading the work of Francis Stuart is the purely practical one of obtaining it. Of thirty books, only six are in print: his three most recent works, We Have Kept the Faith: New and Selected Poems[2] (1982); The High Consistory (1981); A Hole in the Head (1977) ; paperback and hardback versions of Black List, Section H (1971); and re-prints of two earlier novels, The Pillar of Cloud (1948) and Redemption (1949). Nineteen novels, a book of poetry, and a work on Sir Roger Casement are available only through inter-library loan or for reference in copyright libraries. When secondhand copies are on the market, it is usually as fine first editions, sold as collector's items for their condition rather than their content. Certain unusual factors may reduce the availability of Stuart's books when they are in print. In an interview with Anthony Cronin, Stuart has

1 Women and God (1931).
Pigeon Irish (1932).
The Coloured Dome(1932).
Things To Live For (1934).
The Angel of Pity (1935).
The White Hare (1936).
The Pillar of Cloud (1948).
Redemption (1949).
The Flowering Cross (1950).
The Chariot (1955).
Black List, Section H (1971).
Memorial (1973).
A Hole in the Head (1977).
The High Consistory (1981).

2 Francis Stuart, We Have Kept the Faith: New and Selected Poems (Dublin, 1982).

said that 'after the war . . . I was on the black list. In England, not here (Ireland)'.[1] Elsewhere, he described the reaction to the publication of Memorial (1973) in Ireland:

> My last novel, a novel called Memorial, was seized by the customs and given to the censors to examine. Now, about a year and a half later, they're still examining it and certainly won't ban it. But in a provincial bookshop, I've heard, the bookshop owner-manager has been told by pressure groups to take it out of his window, even out of his shop.[2]

Access to Stuart's work is made more difficult by inaccuracies which appear in some bibliographies. One credits him with a work on bee-keeping by a writer with the same name,[3] and elsewhere errors of detail appear. In The Macmillan Dictionary of Irish Literature, for example, a prize awarded by Harriet Munro's journal Poetry in 1923 for eight poems, is given as awarded in 1924 for a book of poetry;[4] and in J.H. Natterstad's 'Checklist' of Stuart's work, inaccuracies of dating and

1 'The In-Dublin Interview: Coming Up For the Fifteenth: Francis Stuart talks to Anthony Cronin', In-Dublin, 20 December 1979, 9-13 (p.12).

2 J.H. Natterstad, 'An Interview', Journal of Irish Literature, 5, no. 1 (January, 1976), 16-31 (p.108).

3 F. L. Kernowski, C. W. Spinks and L. Loomis, A Bibliography of Modern Irish and Anglo-Irish Literature (San Antonio, Texas, 1976), p. 130 ascribes Immortal Wings (London, 1943) to Stuart. In The Chariot (1953) Amos Selby is mistaken by another character as the author of The Nature and Habits of Bees (p. 163). British Books in Print 1982, 2 vols (London, 1982), II, p. 5364 mistakenly lists Leisure For Mentally Handicapped People amongst Stuart's works; W. B. Yeats, Recollections and Interviews, edited by E. H. Mikhail, 2 vols (London, 1977), II, 371, mistakenly lists The Silver Ship (1940) and The Wild Wings (1951) as works by Stuart.

4 The Macmillan Dictionary of Irish Literature edited by R. Hogan (London, 1980), p. 633; the entry is written by J. H. Natterstad. The eight poems for which Stuart received the Young Poet's Prize were printed in Poetry: A Magazine of Verse, 22, no. 1 (April 1923), 1-5 and the announcement of the award appeared in Poetry: A Magazine of Verse, 23, no. 3 (December 1923), p. 166-7; We Have Kept the Faith was not reviewed by Poetry: A Magazine of Verse until June 1924 and not received by them until January of that year - see Poetry: A Magazine of Verse, 24,no. 3 (June 1924), p. 158.

signature[1] appear.

These difficulties are exacerbated by the lack of critical writing on Stuart, and the limited usefulness of most of that which does exist. The most interesting work of this kind is a Festschrift of essays collected[2] for his seventieth birthday in 1972, which contains a useful and accurate checklist of his books. J.H. Natterstad's short literary biography, published by the Bucknell University Press as part of their Irish Writers series, is constrained by its format, both in length and approach. Elsewhere, discussion of Stuart's work appears in general examinations of Irish or Anglo-Irish literature which deal with Stuart in only a limited way and which are concerned with placing his work in an identifiable literary context rather than examining its individual qualities in depth.[3] Such work is often interesting and stimulating but is necessarily limited. It points, however, to a further problem, that of identifying a milieu or literary context against which Stuart's work might be examined. If he is considered to be an Irish writer then it is necessary to ask what characteristics of the work or its author identify him as that. If an Irish writer is one who is born in Ireland then Stuart must be regarded as an Australian writer, since he was born in Australia, of Irish parentage. If an acceptable definition is a concern with Irish settings or events, then not all of Stuart's work qualifies: The Pillar of Cloud (1929) is set in Germany, for instance, with Ireland as only a background presence, and The Chariot (1953) is set in England. None of his work is written in Irish; and if the argument is used, as

1 'Francis Stuart: A Checklist', p. 41-2 gives the signator of Nationality and Culture and Mystics and Mysticism as H. Stuart, where it is Francis Stuart; editions of Aengus and Motley in which Stuart's work appeared are indicated as undated, although dates appear on them.

2 A Festchrift for Francis Stuart on his Seventieth Birthday, 28 April, 1972, edited by W. J. McCormack (Dublin, 1972).

3 For example, Benedict Kiely, Modern Irish Fiction (Dublin, 1950) which considers Stuart's work as part of the themes in modern Irish prose fiction with which Kiely is concerned.

Anthony Cronin uses it, that 'there is not much point in talking about Anglo-Irish literature ... unless, that is, the works of Whitman or Hart Crane or Melville or Dos Passos or Scott Fitzgerald is Anglo-something'[1] then it does not solve the problem of identifying a milieu which is specifically relevant to Stuart's work.

What is known of Stuart's own affiliations must be considered here. As a founder-member of the Irish Academy of Letters he had the opportunity of contact with leading writers such as W. B. Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, Sean O'Faolain and Liam O'Flaherty.[2] Since his first novel, Women and God (1931) was dedicated to Thomas McGreevy, it is possible that he had access to McGreevy's circle, which included James Joyce, with whom McGreevy was intimate, and Samuel Beckett, who had met McGreevy in 1927 when he took over his place as lecturer at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris.[3] Since no published evidence of such associations is available, however, they must remain conjectural. Further, whatever his earlier associations, Stuart is concerned to free himself from identification with any literary consensus in his later work. In an interview with Ronan Sheehan, Stuart explicitly rejects the idea of a national literature:

1 Anthony Cronin, Heritage Now: Irish Literature in the English Language (Dingle, Co. Kerry, Ireland, 1982), p. 11.

2 Stephen Gwynn, Irish Literature and Drama, (London, 1936) p. 233-5. The list of founder members originally proposed was:

Austin Clarke	Seán O'Faoláin
Padraic Colum	Peadar O'Donnell
Daniel Corkery	Liam O'Flaherty
St. J. Evine	Seumas O'Sullivan
Oliver St. J. Gogarty	Forest Reid
F. R. Higgins	Lennox Robinson
Douglas Hyde	George R. Russell
James Joyce	G. B. Shaw
Brinsley Macnamara	Miss E. O. Somerville
George Moore	James Stephens
T. C. Murray	Francis Stuart
Seán O'Casey	W. B. Yeats
Frank O'Connor	

James Joyce, Sean O'Casey, Douglas Hyde and Daniel Corkery refused the invitation.

3 Deidre Bair, Samuel Beckett (London, 1978) p. 62.

National literature is to my mind a meaningless term. Literature can't be national. Literature is individual. Nationality has nothing to do with it. We have had here some outstanding writers. They happened to be born or to live in Ireland. I don't think they would have been interested in defining a national literature. Let us say there are some Irish writers who are certainly worth discussing as individual writers.[1]

Stuart's intention here is to challenge the kind of easy categorization of literature that can lead to a close consideration of the merits of individual work being avoided, and to emphasise the sense of individual expression he finds in literature. Elsewhere, though, he has made a more specific attack on what he considers to be low standards of writing.[2] In an article entitled 'The Soft Centre of Irish Writing' he suggests that the admiration given to much contemporary Irish writing is the result of a lowering of standards:

> This falsification of standards is achieved and preserved by the simple procedure of narrowing the literary horizon. Judgement is confined to a parochial milieu, and the tone-setters never make any comparisons with the highest contemporary achievements in other countries. [3]

As an example of this narrow parochialism he gives Frank O'Connor's celebrated short stories 'Guests of the Nation', and 'First Confession', which he calls 'verbal knitting'[4] and compares unfavourably with work such as Samuel Beckett's Molloy. His objection to 'First Confession' is its tone of comfortable intimacy:

> Familiar sayings and attitudes are echoed with a nudge of humorous intent, the curtains are drawn, the fire poked, and a nice little tale with a whimsical slant is about to be told. No passion, no interior obsession, no real or outrageous comedy as in Flann O'Brien, Joyce or

1 'Novelists on the Novel: Ronan Sheehan talks to John Banville and Francis Stuart', Cranebag, 3, no. 1, (1979), 76-84 (p.76).
2 Francis Stuart, 'The Soft Centre of Irish Writing', Paddy No More: Modern Irish Short Stories, edited by W. Vorm (Dublin, 1977), 5-9.
3 'The Soft Centre of Irish Writing', p. 7.
4 'The Soft Centre of Irish Writing', p. 8.

Mr. Beckett.[1]

Stuart's deliberate focus on that which is obsessive and intense says more, perhaps, about his own creative imagination than absolute standards by which literature may be judged. At the same time, though, it indicates the difficulty of finding parallels for his work in that of other authors, and this is compounded by the comparative obscurity of some authors that Stuart refers to in his writing. Black List Section H (1971), for example, is dedicated 'In Memory of John Lodwick, dearest of friends'[2] and Memorial (1973)[3] contains several references to Lodwick, a minor novelist whose work has a crude vitality and is often strongly autobiographical. Bid The Soldiers Shoot (1958)[4] is an account of the prisons Lodwick escaped from; other work draws on his experiences in the Special Boat Service.[5] The function of Stuart's references to him is to create a deliberate sense of intimacy, rather than to suggest any similarity between Lodwick's writing and his own. In Black List, Section H (1971) too, there are several references to Solitaria by the Russian writer V.V. Rozanov. Solitaria is a collection of aphorisms and pensées on subjects such as fame - 'Fame is a serpent. May her bite never touch me'[6] - and the relationship between sexuality and religion: 'The connection of a conscience with God - is gathered from this that all a-sexualists reveal themselves also as a-theists'.[7] Rozanov regarded Jewish woman as a central source of this mystical sexuality; curiously,

1 'The Soft Centre of Irish Writing', p. 8.
2 Black List, Section H, Dedication.
3 For example, Memorial, p. 61, p. 204-6.
4 John Lodwick, Bid The Soldiers Shoot (London, 1958).
5 For example, Myrmyda (London, 1946); Somewhere A Voice is Calling, (London, 1953), a much more subdued, controlled account of a man's obsession with his dead wife's infidelity and his need to revenge himself on one hand and make amends for his failure to maintain her love for him on the other, is dedicated to Stuart.
6 V. V. Rozanov, Solitaria: with an abridged account of the Author's Life, by E. Gollerbach, translated by S. S. Koteliansky (London, 1927), p. 114.
7 Solitaria, p. 103.

though, he combined this with 'political anti-semitism. Sympathising instinctively with Jews, he at the same time advocated pogroms against them for "the Christian boy murdered by the Jew Bailis"'.[1] Clearly Rozanov's idea of religion and sensuality being interconnected has some pertinence to Stuart's work; whether Stuart sympathised with Rozanov's political cynicism presents a different question.

In material published as 'Selections from a Berlin Diary, 1942', Stuart says that the book that made 'a greater impression than any other has on me, opening up a whole universe when I first read it about 1926'[2] was Mysticism by Evelyn Underhill.[3] The work is a seminal one in the study of mysticism. It seeks to bring together different accounts of the mystical life and mystical experiences and to present a cohesive account of those aspects of the spiritual consciousness, with especial reference to Christianity. Mystical thought is a very important strand in the understanding of Stuart's work, but it is a highly individual development of the ideas which Underhill's work contains. Central to his aesthetic is the idea of the hero's alienation from society and his need to find a redemptive experience, the experience which Colin Wilson describes as 'naked insight into the purpose of the force that demands life at all costs'.[4] The process through which this is achieved is not an orthodox one, however, but is expressed in highly individualistic terms by Stuart, through his use of certain themes and motifs. The differences between Stuart's and Underhill's mystical notions is as important as their similarities, therefore, since Stuart's idea of redemption comprehends more usual mystical thought and extends it in a personal, idiosyncratic way.

1 Solitaria, p. 41.
2 Francis Stuart, 'Selections from a Berlin Diary, 1942', Journal of Irish Literature, 5, no. 1 (January 1976), 75-96 (p. 84).
3 Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness (London, 1901).
4 The Outsider, p. 187.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in finding an approach to Stuart's work is the lack of biographical information. Clearly, biography is in some way important to understanding Stuart's work. Things To Live For (1934) is subtitled 'Notes for an Autobiography', and Stuart has described Black List, Section H (1971) as 'an imaginative fiction in which only real people appear, and under their actual names where possible', deliberately directing attention to the relationship between his life and his writing. Comparatively little is known about his life, however. Natterstad's book is in the nature of a biographical note rather than an inquiry, since it is only ninety pages long and gives a gloss of all of Stuart's work as well. The events which Natterstad relates match, in broad outline, those recorded by Stuart in his own short, spoken biography.[1] He was educated at Rugby School, which he disliked greatly; in 1920 he married Iseult Gonne, Maud Gonne's daughter and later became involved in the Civil War on the Republican side for which he was subsequently imprisoned by the Free State. Between 1931 and 1939 he published twelve novels and in 1940 took a post as lecturer at Berlin University. He spent the Second World War in Germany, was imprisoned by the Free French forces at the end of the war on unspecified charges, and finally released. Two problems exist with these accounts, however. The first is the lack of independent verification of many of their details. Although Natterstad asserts that Stuart made broadcasts from Germany to Ireland, and although corroboration of this appears in Selections from A Berlin Diary, 1942, that information is not recorded in most of the standard information sources on the area. A recent publication which discusses Stuart's role in the war in the context of Ireland's neutrality also suggests rather different dates for his broadcasts than those given by Natterstad and

1 Francis Stuart, Alternative Government, Claddagh Records (Dublin, 1982), side 2.

the Diary.[1] Clearly, an authoritative biography is required here. The second problem is one of interpretation. Because the events of Stuart's life are paralleled or echoed by some of the settings of his novels there is a danger of making a simple equation between the two. The inadequacy of this as a method for understanding his work is made clear by the example of his involvement in the Civil War. According to Natterstad, this came about because:

> Initially he felt a certain enthusiasm for the Republican cause, primarily because it was something he could share with Iseult and even his mother-in-law. For one of the few times in his life he felt part of 'a community of like-minded people'. 2

This slightly ludicrous reason of looking for a bond with his mother-in-law is appropriate to the humour Stuart uses in his description of H in Black List, Section H (1971), from which Natterstad has paraphrased his explanation. According to Stuart himself, in interview, he regarded the Civil War initially in the same light he had viewed the Russian Revolution, as a force which would alter the values on which society was based:

> I saw the Irish Civil War as something approximating in a small way the Russian Revolution, which at that time I still believed in . . . I disliked society as constituted, especially Irish society, and I thought this was going to be a war to make Ireland a better place for poets, or some such naive belief. 3

For the narrator-hero of Things To Live For (1934), participation in the Civil War was part of his belief that 'It is only through opening one's arms to life that one will find the ultimate peace and security'.

1 Robert Fisk, In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality, 1939-45 (London, 1983).
2 Francis Stuart, p.28. Natterstad's quotation is taken from Black List, Section H, p. 73.
3 'An Interview', p. 23.

Fighting allows him to experience 'the strange joy of patriotism'[1] and his capture shows him that 'the romantic, the inspiring, the lyrical, will always be a lost cause in this dark age which is organised for business men and commerce'.[2] There is an added complexity in that final statement since the term 'lost cause' does not seem to refer to the hero's own, personal defeat. Rather, it seems to refer to the Republican movement as a whole, and since the novel was written in 1934, two years after de Valera and Fianna Fáil had come to power, it may indicate a disillusionment with his administration. Again, there is no published evidence to show whether this is so, whether the view is one which is given to a fictional hero as part of his characterisation, or whether it was Stuart's own at the time of writing. The difficulties of a historical approach to Stuart's work are considerable, therefore, since the factual material necessary to such a study is unavailable. This does not mean that such an inquiry should be avoided, but that it does not provide a sufficient base on which to build a case for a revaluation of Stuart's work. Rather it is necessary to ask what role biography plays in his fiction; as previously stated, some of his novels are set in places where he has lived - Glendalough, for example, where Stuart lived from 1929[3] onwards, and Germany. It is necessary to ask exactly how that sort of knowledge is useful to an understanding of Stuart's work, and what insights an examination of his use of biography can give. The period spent by Stuart in Germany clearly raises questions about his affiliations and because of the state of knowledge about Stuart the source for answers to these questions, and the basis of a revaluation of Stuart's work must necessarily be the work itself. As Roger Garfitt suggests:

1 Things To Live For, p. 9.
2 Things To Live For, p. 42-3.
3 Francis Stuart, p. 36.

In the passage from Black List where Stuart discusses the element of 'criminality in the intensely imaginative mind', he concludes that 'the artist's guilt or innocence could never be strictly determined, not by himself and certainly not by those in authority. Perhaps the quality of his work was the only real test of the state of a writer's psyche'. There are still critics who feel that Stuart's move to Berlin in 1940 prejudices everything he has since written. I would argue precisely the opposite: that to the questions raised by that decision, to the questions Stuart himself raises when discussing it, the character of his work since then provides the only sufficient answer. [1]

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SUMMARY

Francis Stuart's published corpus consists of thirty books, including three short works entitled Nationality and Culture, Mystics and Mysticism and Racing For Pleasure and Profit;[2] several uncollected short stories; a quantity of uncollected reviews, extracts from plays and novels, poems, and short critical pieces; and a long-playing record containing selected readings and a biographical discourse. Since the availability of his work is a determining factor in its relative importance to the argument of the thesis, it can be most usefully summarised in these broad categories.

Books

Stuart's books fall into three distinct chronological periods: seventeen published between 1923 and 1940; eight published between 1948 and 1959; and, after an interval of twelve years, a re-flowering of five works published between 1971 and 1982. His first work was a book of poetry as is his most recent, and they share similar titles: We Have Kept the Faith was published in 1923 and We Have Kept the Faith: New and Selected Poems, which contains some of the earlier verse, was published

1 Roger Garfitt 'Outside the Moral Pale', London Magazine, New Series, 16, no. 4 (October-November 1976), 59-70 (p. 70).

2 Francis Stuart, Racing for Pleasure and Profit in Ireland and Elsewhere (Dublin & Cork, [1937]). The work is undated but the date 1937 is ascribed by J. H. Natterstad in 'Francis Stuart: A Checklist', p. 41. The source for the date is not given. The work is not listed by W. J. McCormack in 'The Books of Francis Stuart'.

in 1982. The implication of the repeated title is that his work has been structured by some common, harmonising idea which is represented throughout it, and that he has been consistent in his concern for that idea. Although the most recent book of verse shows striking differences of tone, style and subject between the early poems of its first part and the later poems of its second part, clearly Stuart is suggesting that his work should be considered in the light of the ideas and themes to which he believes he has been faithful, and which provide a view of it which is more coherent than a simple summary provides. The purpose of this summary, therefore, is to provide a background description of his books against which analysis and discussion can take place.

We Have Kept the Faith (1923) contained thirty-two poems and a short dramatic dialogue entitled 'Dido and Aeneas'. Most of the poems are dated individually and some have their place of composition given. The verse is descriptive rather than narrative; it is especially concerned with the emotions of loss, transience, and love and is intimate in tone. The published lecture given by Stuart for Sinn Fein on Nationality and Culture (1924) raises interesting questions about the cultural identity of Ireland, including architecture and radio as well as literature and the theatre. The lecture suggests that since they are ways of expressing national feeling the poor record of the Free State in the propagation of distinctively Irish forms of them has allowed a 'peaceful penetration' of Ireland by England,[1] which demonstrates the government's inadequacy. Mystics and Mysticism (1929) provides a brief summary of mystical thought in the context of the Roman Catholic Church, and relates it to the actions of everyday life. Like Nationality and Culture it focuses less on the large, striking and well-known aspects

1 Nationality and Culture, p. 11.

of the issue it raises and more on their manifestation in unconventional forms.

Stuart's first novel, Women and God (1931) is set in Lourdes and Ireland. It concerns the search for a firm basis to living by its characters, especially by its hero, Colin, and the effect on this of the miraculous healing of one of them, a young woman named Elizabeth. Through this, the question of the relationship between human and religious love, and the possiblities of both kinds of love, which forms the central theme of the novel, is debated. Pigeon Irish (1932) raises some similar questions: by using an imaginative setting of Ireland about to be engulfed by a Continental war, it also raises the problem of finding a spiritual truth, which can be extended beyond purely personal experience. The decision of Frank Allen to rebel against the rest of the Irish Army Commanders and to accept court-martial so that he can form a small community in which spiritual and cultural values may be preserved, suggests that the experience is not communicable on any large scale. However, the presence of Catherine, the girl who accompanies him to the community and who first suggested the idea, suggests again the link between woman and spiritual experience, and thus the possibility of some small-scale sharing and passing-on of such ideas. The Coloured Dome (1932) focuses more specifically on the individuality of spiritual experience. Gary Delea, a bookie's clerk, is tired of his pointless social round in Dublin without knowing what more he wants. When he meets the mysterious IRA leader, Tulloolagh McCoolagh, he agrees to become one of the IRA representatives who are to be given up to the government in return for a list of IRA members which the government has acquired. In the prison cell they share, Tulloolagh reveals her feminine identity to Delea and they become lovers in the expectation of death the next morning. In fact, they are released; but Delea, realising that in sacrifice he could find the apotheosis he requires,

deliberately returns to prison, where he waits for death, at peace at last.

Try the Sky (1933) is a highly imaginative novel, but is not entirely successful. It is set in Vienna and Munich, and concerns an encounter between two couples, José and Carlotta, and Beltane and Buttercup. Carlotta suffers from a terrible awareness of what she calls the abyss, a potential for despair into which she can easily be sucked. Buttercup is an Amor-Indian princess, who has visited Russia to get help for her tribe; vitally connected with the earth and its life, she has no such problems. The four travel to Munich together, and at a hotel there Carlotta shelters a fugitive Nazi and is wounded in the ensuing scuffle. The doctor who attends invites the party to accompany him on a flight to their homes in a new aircraft named The Spirit. This they do, after a huge banquet. The novel is interesting because of its use of certain themes and motifs, and because, as W. J. McCormack comments, it 'contains what must be the only description by an Irish writer of Weimar Germany'.[1] Compton MacKenzie's foreword to the novel emphasises its concern with spiritual truth. However, while this is certainly a merit, tone and setting veer between realistic and symbolic, and produce an uneasiness which makes the novel less cohesive than its predecessors.[2] In Glory (1933), this difficulty is overcome. The novel is concerned with a world-war, begun in China, which ends with the execution of the woman who inspired its leaders and an old acquaintance of hers, Frank de Lacy, who has spent the war meditating in a shed he constructed as a hermitage. The woman, Mairead, has searched for an earthly glory, and Frank for an inner mystical glory: both find inner truth at the moment of execution. The novel works because it is detached from realism: the

1 W. J. McCormack, 'An Introduction to Francis Stuart's Novels', in A Festchrift for Francis Stuart on his Seventieth Birthday, 28 April 1972, edited by W. J. McCormack (Dublin, 1972), 9-17 (p. 11).
2 Francis Stuart, Glory, (London, 1933).

speed with which the war starts, progresses and ends and the focus on its impact on so few people make it essentially a symbolic war. This symbolic quality is increased because of the parallel between the search for glory of the two central characters and the way in which it is suggested, therefore, that the war is a sort of equivalent to the meditations of de Lacy. Thus the focus is on the internal development of individuals and the uneasiness of Try the Sky is replaced by a coherence of symbolism against a naturalistic setting.

By contrast, Things To Live For (1934) appears to seat itself in realism. It provides a series of anecdotes drawn from the narrator's life and chosen to illustrate the need for 'something lasting and indestructible'.[1] The anecdotes fall into three groups, those about people he knows who have found this experience; and those about the personal suffering and about the personal joy which he believes will lead to that experience. Although the book is sub-titled 'Notes for an Autobiography' its exact status is not easy to determine, partly because it does not follow the chronological form associated with biography and partly because it raises similar issues to those dealt with in his novels. In Search of Love (1935)[2] is a rather slight piece of work. It concerns a middle-aged widow, Margaret Hubbard, who is drawn into the frivolous life of a film starlet, Coral Century, and their experiences making films and setting fashions in various parts of the world. It has a certain whimsical charm, arising from the humorous sexual exploits of Coral Century, which contrasts sharply with the brutal murder which brings events to a close and which suggests a bleak reality below the frivolous pursuit of its heroine. The Angel of Pity (1935), although published in the same year, is quite different in tone. The novel opens with a battlefield which has devastated the countryside and which is

1 Things To Live For, p. 274.
2 Francis Stuart, In Search of Love (London, 1935).

deserted except for the narrator of the novel, who is a soldier, and a member of the enemy army. The enemy soldier relates a curious tale about a girl whom he believed to be a prostitute but who was, in fact, an angel. The narrator and the enemy who has now become his companion set out to find the girl-angel, Sonia. When they reach her, however, they are attacked by a marauding party, who kill her in a mass rape which is described as though it were a crucifixion. Later, when the narrator returns to find the body, Sonia has ascended to heaven. The subject and the action of the work are astonishing, but it is saved from being either blasphemous or absurd by the care devoted to its style. Rhythms are intricate, almost litanical, sentences are circumlocutory and self-echoing, the pace is deliberately slow and the background deliberately vast. The total effect is one of immensity and intimacy, and is curiously convincing.

The White Hare (1936) returns to more conventional settings. It examines the impossible love between a small boy, Dominic, and a much older girl, Hylla, who eventually becomes his sister-in-law. Their love is represented by the symbol of the white hare, a rare, wild, but ill-omened thing. Before the wedding of Hylla to his elder brother, Patrick, Dominic catches a white hare in the grounds of Rosaril, their house in the countryside of western Ireland, and buries it there. Later, Dominic, Hylla and her husband are obliged to move to Dublin, where Dominic eventually joins a merchant ship on which he is drowned. When Hylla returns to Rosaril, she comes upon the collar-bone of the hare where Dominic buried it. The novel is a fine, graceful one, and has a compassion and a tragic sense which prefigures that of Memorial (1973), which also uses the hare as its central motif.

The Bridge (1937) and Julie (1938) are both concerned with the deadening influence of provincial, small-town life, and the need of their heroines to escape from it. Both attempt to do so through their

liasons with minor criminals. Joanna Flynn, in The Bridge (1937) has an affair with the corrupt town-engineer, Byrne; however, Byrne's criminality is of the pettiest sort and when retribution threatens and an opportunity to escape from it is offered, he takes it, leaving Joanna behind. Julie, in Julie (1938) is more successful. Her employer, Ben Goldberg, makes his living by committing arson on his own property, which he has previously over-insured. When he is arrested, Julie goes through a crisis of loyalties and leaves Goldberg for a young Irish writer. She realises, though, that her first loyalties are to Goldberg, and that the home of the young writer represents the petty, narrow-minded provincialism from which she wished to escape. She returns to Goldberg who is in prison, and the novel ends with her initiating another of his half-legal schemes, until he can join her and take it over.

Between those two novels Stuart wrote an eighty-page guide to horse-racing, entitled Racing For Pleasure and Profit in Ireland and Elsewhere [1937]. From the point of view of racing, it provides an interesting and informed discussion of topics such as form, training, horses and jockeys, as well as advice on betting. What is interesting from the point of view of his other work, however, is his view of racecourses as places 'where all normal values are quite upset'[1] and racing's attraction as being, in part, the risks involved, since 'all the best adventures and thrills of life are in some way dangerous, and to banish danger from the race-course is to banish the real excitement'.[2] Given these sorts of comments and the frequent use of horse-racing in his novels as a source of risk-taking to find some greater insights it is obvious that, for Stuart, there are not clear divisions between the ideas he treats in his own creative writing and

1 Racing For Pleasure and Profit in Ireland and Elsewhere, p. 7.
2 Racing For Pleasure and Profit, p. 20.

those he finds in other areas which interest him.

The Great Squire (1939)[1] is Stuart's only attempt at historical fiction. Set in the last years of the eighteenth century, it concerns the exploits of Garrett O'Neal, a wild and wealthy Irish landowner. Amongst these is a race between an English racehorse and an Irish pig, on which O'Neill has staked everything. The race, which is described with great tension and humour, is won by the pig. O'Neill's dissipated way of life is altered by a marriage in which he finds complete happiness. This is brought to an end, however, when he pretends to be his brother, Paudeen, who is hunted by English Redcoats for his insurrectionary activities, and accepts the death sentence instead of Paudeen. The novel is a rich, well-written one, although it lacks something of the immediacy and intensity of other work of Stuart's in the 1930s.

Only one book was published by Stuart during his period in Germany. According to J. H. Natterstad, William Maloney refused permission for a German translation of his book The Forged Casement Diaries, whereupon Stuart was invited 'to prepare a manuscript advancing the same idea, which could then be translated into German'.[2] How much of Der Fall Casement (1940)[3] is Stuart's work, how much a paraphrase of Maloney's book, and how much the addition or modification of the translator cannot be known. The usefulness of this defence of Casement to a consideration of Stuart's work is limited, therefore.

The first of Stuart's post-war novels is one of his finest pieces of work. The Pillar of Cloud (1948) is set in the French-occupied zone of Germany after the Second World War. The hardship and desolation of

1 Francis Stuart, The Great Squire (London, 1939).
2 Francis Stuart, p. 61. The author of The Forged Casement Diaries is printed mistakenly as 'Moroney' in 'The Books of Francis Stuart', p. 59.
3 Francis Stuart, Der Fall Casement: Das Leben Sir Roger Casements und der Verleumdungsfeldzug des Secret Service, translated by Ruth Weiland (Hamburg, [1940]).

life forces the hero of the novel, Dominic to reassess his values and to seek some meaningful basis to life. This he finds through his relationship with two sisters, Lisette and Halka; their relationship is mutually nurturing, and although Lisette dies of tuberculosis, she does so freed of the terrible nightmares that have assailed her all her life. Dominic and Halka are obliged to remain in Markheim and there, in close communion with each other, they find the integrative, redemptive experience they need to begin life anew. The austerity of the setting and the tenderness which exists in spite of that, the potential for despair but the continuation of hope, make the novel thematically a very rich one.

Redemption (1949) draws on the sense of despair which threatened the central characters of The Pillar of Cloud (1948). Its hero, Amos, has returned to Ireland from war-time Germany believing that the woman he loved, Margareta, has been killed. His cynicism and destructiveness concur with the events in the town: a fake 'miracle' and a brutual murder. The return of Margareta, crippled but alive, however, is the catalyst which allows other, nurturing values to be asserted. Amos, Margareta, the murderer, and others alienated from society by fear or a sense of personal inadequacy, form a small community which shares a sense of a set of values which transcends purely material ones, and which provides some reason for pain and chaos, however difficult it may be to express in words. While Redemption (1949) lacks the gracefulness of A Pillar of Cloud (1949) it complements its major preoccupation skillfully and effectively, and is a powerful piece of work.

The Flowering Cross (1950) is an interesting work although it lacks the breadth of the first two post-war novels. It examines the nature of the artist's vocation through the relationship between Louis Clancy, an artist, and Alyse, a blind girl whom he meets while they are in prison together. There is a brief mention of Louis's past escape from a German

prisoner of war camp and its associated experiences but the thrust of the novel is towards the consideration of faithfulness, betrayal and forgiveness in Louis and Alyse's relationship. Especially important to the novel is its central metaphor, woman as redeemer, as a cross which heals and brings new life. Good Friday's Daughter (1952) also examines the question of love and fidelity. Mark Considine loves Danielle, the wife of his brother, Leo. Leo, for his part, is attracted to Antonia, a woman who helps on their poultry-farm and who has been tried and sentenced for the murder of her husband. Eventually, Mark and Danielle commit suicide together; Leo is desolated by both losses, which he convinces himself were accidental, and the farm goes to seed. When Antonia is released from prison, however, she returns to the farm, obliges Leo to admit the truth, and thus enables him to find tranquillity and acceptance. The novel is interesting because of its continuity of theme with other of Stuart's work but in all other essentials it is a minor piece.

The Chariot (1953) is a more attractive novel than Good Friday's Daughter (1952) although it, too, is not one of Stuart's major books. While working in an all-night security office in London, Amos Selby, a struggling writer, is approached by a prostitute, Lena Darnell, who asks him to cash a cheque from one of her clients. Their relationship develops: Amos cannot write because he is too tired from his night-job, and Lena has turned to prostitution only to support her bed-ridden mother. In the dénouement of the novel, all three find security and peace living together in the lodge of a cemetery, where Amos and Lena have a job as its caretakers. The novel is less intense than Good Friday's Daughter (1952) and contains a great deal more humour, especially the scene where, having gained employment as a private chef at a dinner party, Amos loses his grip on the preparation of the meal and leaves the house with the guests still sitting at the table.

Stuart returns to the setting of Lourdes for The Pilgrimage (1955). Its plot is unlikely: Bishop Jean-Marie Senlac must try to obtain possession of a forged papyrus which describes how its writer was hired to remove the body of Christ from its tomb, stealthily and by night, and to throw it over the side of a boat into the Sea of Galilea. More convincing is the sub-plot which concerns the illness of a young child, Chaton, with whom Jean-Marie is concerned, and what impact the novel has comes from its questioning of the nature of religious faith and spiritual values. In spite of its weak plot, that investigation is forceful, especially that part which uses the rape of Chaton to pose questions about the nature of sin and forgiveness.

Similar sorts of questions are raised by Isaak Kaminski, in Victors and Vanquished (1958). For various personal reasons, the hero of the novel, Irish poet Luke Cassidy, has taken a post lecturing at Berlin University, during the Second World War. The novel deals with the slow breakdown of civilised life in Berlin and with the persecution of the Jewish people in Germany, whom Isaak represents. The novel is as remarkable for its setting as for its narrative, which deals with Cassidy's reluctant associations with the IRA in Berlin, a visit to German prisoner of war camps near Posen, and his eventual escape from the city with Isaak's daughter, Myra, with whom he lives in harmony and security, as Dominic does with Halka in The Pillar of Cloud (1948). Unfortunately, the quality of the novel which closed this second chronological period of Stuart's writing was weaker than that of the rest of it. Angels of Providence (1959) is a slight piece of work, which does not convince. Narrative and characterisation are adequate but not exciting or revealing. Samuel Byrne, a struggling painter, falls in with a money-grabbing family, the Morgans, who eventually

1 Francis Stuart, Angels of Providence (London, 1959).

accompany Samuel to the home of his dying uncle. Mrs. Morgan persuades the uncle to alter his will to leave Samuel the house and her the money, and the novel ends with them working towards some sort of an agreement to live together. Although it is entertaining, after the fashion of In Search of Love (1935), it lacks the intensity and insight which can be found elsewhere in Stuart's work.

After an interval of twelve years, Black List, Section H was published in 1971. Many of the experiences of its central character, H, recall those of other heroes in other novels. Like Luke Cassidy in Victors and Vanquished (1958), for example, H takes a lecturing post in war-time Berlin and like Leo, in Good Friday's Daughter (1952) he runs a poultry farm in Ireland. In purpose, however, Black List, Section H resembles more closely Things To Live For (1934), since its status, too, is unusual: it is described as 'an imaginative fiction in which only real people appear and under their own names where possible'. It charts the growth of H to artistic consciousness, through an unhappy marriage to Iseult Gonne, a period in Germany, and the development of a relationship with Halka Witebsk which is as spiritually and physically fruitful as his marriage was barren. The style of the work is often colloquial and casual and a great deal of humour underlies the painful honesty with which H's immaturity is recorded and his development charted.

Equally as remarkable as Black List, Section H (1971) is the novel which followed it, Memorial (1973). It deals with the relationship between an elderly writer, Sugrue, and a delinquent teenage girl, Herra. Herra is morbidly sensitive to any suffering, especially that of animals, the hare in particular. As in The White Hare (1936) the hare becomes the central motif of the novel, linking Herra's suffering with Christ's Passion and the appalling destructiveness of the sectarian conflict in the North of Ireland. Herra is shot and killed in a disused

railway-station which she and Sugrue have been developing as a community centre in a 'no-go' area, and Sugrue returns to the south. There, he eventually finds some sort of fellow-feeling with Liz, Herra's middle-aged tutor who has been isolated in her own private torments, and, hoping to make up for his loss of Herra by tenderness to Liz, Sugrue writes the 'report' which the novel consists of, racked with grief for her death. The restraint of the novel is as great a part of its merit as its intense emotion; the whole is characterised by a tenderness and intimacy which is tempered by a rigorous control of his material.

A Hole in the Head (1977) also uses the North of Ireland as part of its setting. Barnaby Shane attempts suicide by shooting himself with a small- calibre pistol, which leaves a head-wound which will not heal. Partly because of this and partly because of the hallucinogenic drugs he takes, he is subject to what seem to be a delusion: he believes that Emily Brontë accompanies him wherever he goes. Eventually, though, the wound heals and he sees the world as others see it. After moving to Belbury, in the North of Ireland, Shane becomes involved with negotiations to free children held as hostages by a para-military organisation. He offers himself in exchange and the children are released; in the house where he is kept, though, there is also an old, deaf, bed-ridden woman who knew him in his former state. She inquires after the young lady - Emily Brontë - whom Shane had believed accompanied him. The novel is a difficult one, because of its explorations of illusion and reality. At the same time, though, this also gives rise to a great deal of humour - such as when Shane insists that friends buy a theatre ticket for Emily as well - and it is characteristic of Stuart's concern with the value of the imagination that the 'normal' Shane sees a world which is bleaker, more sterile, than that he had occupied in his deluded state.

Stuart's most recent novel is also his most complex. The High

Consistory (1981) uses a deliberately disjointed chronology to suggest that certain experiences have an importance outside the constraints of time, in the life of its hero, an elderly painter named Simeon Grimes. The plot is relatively simple. Grimes has become sterile both sexually and artistically and it is only by finding a new understanding of life outside the moral pale of society that he can become potent again. The agent of this discovery is Claire Dubois, who is herself alienated by a sexual passion she had for a wild ocelot, which was shot after she freed it from a zoo. The style of the novel is extremely complex, however. It interweaves allusions, both internally and to other work in his corpus, to create a remarkably dense, textured piece of writing. Further, it is deliberately subject to the sort of inexactitude that memory is subject to, and this, combined with its challenge to orthodox form - the epilogue is in three different places in the novel - presents especial difficulties to the reader. The challenge is well worth taking up, however, since the novel is exciting both because of its disturbing effect and because it represents Stuart's most accomplished achievement so far.

The concerns of his mature novels - isolation, the need to find new literary forms, experimentation with internal referencing and with subtle, colloquial styles of language - are reflected in the new poems included in We Have Kept the Faith: New and Selected Poems (1982). In one,[1] he identifies himself as a 'gardener outside the walls'; in others he refers to Lili Brik, Mayakovsky's mistress, by 'the pet-name of Lissik'.[2] The collection also indicates the sense of harmony which Stuart clearly feels exists in his work and points to those earlier poems which he values especially. Some poems are printed which appear

1 'The Garden', We Have Kept the Faith: New and Selected Poems, p. 43.
2 'Questions, Questions', We Have Kept the Faith: New and Selected Poems, p. 46; see also 'Lissik', p. 32.

in his novels - 'The Prisoner I' appears in Victors and Vanquished[1] (1958) for example; and 'For A Dancer II' and 'Criminals' are among the important early poems reprinted.

Short Stories

Stuart's first short story, 'The Isles of the Blest' was published in the English Review in 1934.[2] It concerns a Russian pilot who flies to Canada from Ireland with a young girl, in a sea-plane which he usually uses for giving tourists ten-minute trips.[3] 'The Bandit' (1938) concerns a small girl, named Julie, who hero-worships her family's lodger because she believes he is a daring criminal. When she realises he is only a sneak-thief, she steals a bank payroll so that when he is arrested for his petty crimes the police, and Julie's little brother, respect him as a master-criminal. Although both stories are competently written, their main interest lies in their associations with Stuart's novels: 'The Isles of the Blest' with Try the Sky (1933) and Glory (1933), and the 'The Bandit' with Julie (1938).

In 'Minou', published in Good Housekeeping in 1959,[4] an elderly night-watchman regularly visits an ocelot in a local zoo and forms a special bond of feeling with it. Finally, when he is unable to bear the animal's captivity any longer, he steals it from the zoo and takes it to a lonely cottage where he and the animal live in harmony until the ocelot returns to the wild and the old man dies. Here, although 'Minou' has added significance when read in the context of The High Consistory (1981), the story has an accomplished charm and individuality.

1 We Have Kept the Faith: New and Selected Poems, p. 33; Victors and Vanquished, p. 237.
2 Francis Stuart 'The Isles of the Blest', English Review, 59 (December 1934), pp. 674-687.
3 Francis Stuart 'The Bandit', Cornhill, 157 (February, 1938), pp. 231-241.
4 Francis Stuart 'Minou', Good Housekeeping, 75, no. 3 (March, 1959), 89 & 153-158.

The interest of 'Jacob' (1971)[1] lies in its deliberate re-interpretation of parts of the story of the Biblical Jacob. Instead of keeping sheep, Jacob MacGregor trains racehorses, and his 'Rachel' is met at the well of a lift-shaft. 'The Stormy Petrel' (1973)[2] is much more challenging, both in theme and style. It concerns a writer who sets out to an important official function at which he may be offered a high literary award, although he has always prided himself on being outside any social status quo. En route by small boat he sees a stormy petrel skimming just above the rough sea and realises the dangerousness of any award to his creative imagination. This decision is not stated openly, however, but left for the reader to realise himself; the story ends with the statement that anyone who wants to know the end hasn't bothered to read it.

'2016' (1979)[3] concerns a set of young revolutionaries of the future who wish to stir the minds and spirits of the half-drugged, consumer orientated society they live in, as their forerunners did a hundred years previously. It is a short polemic on the inadequacy of the social structure, art and the Church to cope with the disintegration of spiritual values in an increasingly dehumanised society. 'Nocturne at the Cable Shop' (1980)[4] uses an establishment similar to that in which Amos worked, in The Chariot (1953), as its setting. Again, the reader is on the fringe of events and obliged to gather what he can of a loss or death which affects one of the people in the cable shop.

'The Water Garden' (1980)[5] and 'Revelations' (1981)[6] both

1 Francis Stuart 'Jacob', Irish Press, 9 October 1971, p.9.
2 Francis Stuart 'The Stormy Petrel', Atlantis, 1, no. 6 (Winter 1973-4), 19-21.
3 Francis Stuart '2016', Cork Review, [1], no. 1 (Nov-Dec 1979), 8-10.
4 Francis Stuart 'Nocturne at the Cable Shop', Cork Review, [1], no. 2 (Jan-Feb 1980), 8-9.
5 Francis Stuart 'The Water Garden', Firebird 2 edited by T.J. Binding (London, 1983) 211-16. First published in Cork Review, [1], no. 3 (March-April 1980), 22-23.
6 Francis Stuart 'Revelations', Bananas, 26 (April 1981), p. 39.

investigate childhood. In the first, a child is given a tank which he believes to contain small, hardly visible fish; later as an adult, it is suggested that he was the victim of a practical joke. His belief in the fish created them, however, and this demonstration of the imagination's ability to create and console is used as a stepping stone for comment on the moral nature of society. In 'Revelations' (1981) Tobit Spokane uses the death of his cousin in the war as an excuse to save himself from punishment at school and only then feels the full impact of the loss. Again, the story emphasises the power of the imagination to reveal certain truths.

Uncollected Review, Extracts and Critical Writing

Since Stuart is a prolific writer, any attempt even to list his uncollected short writings would be a major task. Its content is various. Stuart has reviewed regularily for several newspapers and journals, including Hibernia, and much of his comment on the work of other authors provides insights into his own. A number of interviews with him have been published in which he discusses his work and his aesthetics. Especially important amongst these are: Natterstad's interview published in 1976;[1] the discussion between Stuart, John Banville and Ronan Sheehan published in Cranebag (1979);[2] and the In-Dublin interview with Anthony Cronin (1979).[3]

A considerable amount of Stuart's poetry is uncollected. Extracts from novels have been published while they were in progress; one chapter from The High Consistory (1981) which was published in this way but was not included in the final version of the novel appeared in 1980.[4] None of Stuart's plays have been published but extracts from Who Fears To

1 'An Interview'.
2 'Novelists on the Novel'.
3 'Coming up for the Fifteenth'.
4 Francis Stuart, 'from The High Consistory', The Writers: A Sense of Ireland, edited by Andrew Carpenter and Peter Fallon (Dublin, 1980), 203-7.

Speak, a play about Terence MacSwiney, appeared in The Journal of Irish Literature[1] in 1976 and in the little magazine, Icarus in 1978. Amongst non-fiction, Stuart's account of the death of Frank Ryan in Germany, which was published in The Bell[2] in 1950, is the authoritative one.

Manuscripts of some of Stuart's work, including Black List Section H (1971) are owned by the Morris Library, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.[3] The National Library of Ireland contains several letters written by Stuart to Joseph O'Neill in 1934-5 and one written to F.R. Higgins in 1935.[4] A full list of manuscripts and letters is given by J.H. Natterstad in 'Francis Stuart: A Checklist'.

In 1982 Claddagh Records produced a long-playing record containing readings from Stuart's novels and an autobiographical account.[5] It is interesting because although its primary need is to be representative it emphasises the importance of certain areas of his work. The poem 'Criminals' appears there, for example, as does extracts from The Pillar of Cloud (1948) and Black List, Section H (1971). The autobiographical note, too, is useful in testifying to the consistency of certain views held by Stuart which are expressed elsewhere.

1 Francis Stuart, 'from Who Fears To Speak', Journal of Irish Literature, 5, no. 1 (January 1976), 70-74; Francis Stuart, 'from Who Fears To Speak', Icarus, 70 (1978), pp. 7-10.

2 Francis Stuart, 'Frank Ryan in Germany', The Bell, 16, no. 2 (November 1950), 37-42; Francis Stuart, 'Frank Ryan in Germany part II', The Bell, 16, no. 3 (December 1950), 38-40.

3 Morris Library: Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Francis Stuart, Black List, Section H, Special Collection Coll 52, Box 1, Folder 2 (MS of an early draft of the novel).

4 National Library of Ireland: Letters to Joseph O'Neill, 1934-35 (MS 8184); Letters to F.R. Higgins, 1935 (MS. 10,864).

5 Alternative Government.

CHAPTER 2: AESTHETICS

The Times Literary Supplement of 26th May, 1921 carried a letter from H. Stuart about a misprint in a poem by John Keats. The Centenary of Keats's death had fallen some weeks earlier, on 23rd February, and Stuart wrote that it was 'not an inopportune moment to point out what to my mind is a misprint of some importance in a beautiful poem'.[1] He continued:

> I refer to the poem "Teignmouth", an epistle to John Hamilton Reynolds. Line 75 of that poem has been printed in all the editions in which I have looked as:-
>
> "High reason, and the love of good and ill."
>
> I am vehemently certain, as I think most will be who have understood anything of the poet, that, in this context at least, he would not have written of the "love" of good and ill as never being his award, which, apart from any other consideration, is a weak and uncertain phrase as to exact meaning in itself.
>
> Keats never saw this poem in print, and I think it obvious that "love" is a printer's mistake for the more forcible and Keatsian "lore". [2]

The letter has some relevance to Keatsian scholarship, since subsequent editions of Keats's poetry include the emendation suggested by Stuart. More importantly, though, the letter shows that Stuart was especially interested in aesthetics,[3] that is, in the beliefs and ideas that inform an author's work. Clearly, he saw it as a governing force so strong that if one word should be inappropriate to an author's aesthetics, that word must be regarded as an error. The standards which he applies to Keats may be applied to himself: whatever is written by a poet is the

1 H. Stuart, 'A Misprint in Keats', Times Literary Supplement, 26 May 1921, p. 341.

2 'A Misprint in Keats'.

3 The term 'aesthetics' is used here in the sense employed in the analysis of James Joyce's writing on aesthetics which prefaces the collection of comments on the subject printed in James Joyce, The Critical Writings, edited by E. Mason and R. Ellmann (New York, 1959), p. 141: 'Impelled in part by his ambition to establish the relation of drama to other genres, Joyce went heroically on to compound his own aesthetic'.

product of aesthetics which are consistent and thus clearly discernible. His verse must avoid phrases which are 'weak and uncertain' and it must be 'forcible', that is, it must deliver lines with an impact which is developed throughout the whole poem.

The letter shows that Stuart had studied both 'Teignmouth'[1] and Keats's aesthetics very closely, and they may be used to provide illuminating comparisons with his own work. 'Teignmouth' describes Keats's vision into 'the core/Of an eternal destruction.' His poetic consciousness obliges him to see destruction and horror in pastoral scenes which inspire tranquillity in others:

> . . . tho, to-day,
> I've gathered young spring-leaves, and flowers gay
> Of periwinkle and wild strawberry,
> Still do I that most fierce destruction see, -
> The Shark at savage prey, - the Hawk at pounce, -
> Ravening the worm . . . [2]

Keats's view of reality is different from that which is commonly accepted, therefore, and this difference is emphasised further by his notion of Negative Capability. In his famous letter to George and Thomas Keats he says:

> several things dovetailed in my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature . . . I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason. Coleridge, for instance, would let go a fine isolated versimilitude, caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining Content with half-knowledge. [3]

Inspired vision, rather than an intellectual understanding, is necessary

1 The poem is now more usually indexed as 'To J. H. Reynolds, Esq.'
2 Keats's Poetical Works, p. 383.
3 The Letters of John Keats, edited by H.E. Rollins, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1958), I, 193-4.

for access to the abstract body of knowledge that Keats calls the 'Penetralium of mystery'. There are affinities between this idea and Stuart's interpretation of mysticism. Both assume a body of knowledge or experience that has some absolute existence and which is not accessible through the intellect or the senses. Instead, some more inspired, less easily described experience is required which transcends the limits of ordinary apprehension to reach an esoteric truth. For both Keats and Stuart, this inspiration is linked with suffering, the 'dark night of the soul' for Stuart and the 'eternal fierce destruction' for Keats.

A further analysis of Keats's notion of Negative Capability, such as that made by W.J. Bate[1] provides other opportunities for comparison and contrast. The first crucial statement, according to Bate, is as follows:

> The excellence of every Art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth - Examine King Lear and you will find this exemplified throughout; but in this picture we have unpleasantness without any momentous depth of speculation excited, in which to bury its repulsiveness. [2]

Bate interprets this to mean that:

> In the active co-operation or full "greeting" of the experiencing imagination and its object, the nature or "identity" of the object is grasped so vividly that only those associations and qualities that are strictly relevant to the central conception remain. The irrelevant and discordant (the "disagreeables") "evaporate" from this fusion of object and mind. Hence "Truth" and "Beauty" spring simultaneously into being, and also begin to approximate each other. [3]

Here, it seems, are the opposite qualities grasped by the creative mind

1 W.J. Bate, John Keats (Cambridge, Mass., 1963).
2 Bate, p. 243.
3 Bate, p. 243.

with which Stuart was concerned. The experiencing of them 'may be distressing and even cruel to human nature' but will nevertheless provide a 'release and extension . . . of human insight', Bate continues. This embracing of experience involves a loss of self, rather like the death of self Stuart spoke of in Mystics and Mysticism: paraphrasing the 'Negative Capability letter' Bate says:

> In our life of uncertainties, where no one system . . . can explain everything . . . what is needed is an imaginative openness of mind and heightened receptivity to reality in its full and diverse concreteness. This, however, involves negating one's own ego. 1

From this, Bate traces the influence on Keats of Hazlitt's Essay on the Principles of Human Action, an essay written to refute the Hobbesian view that man is motivated by self-interest alone, by demonstrating that man can only conceive of his future well-being through empathy with others; thus, according to Hazlitt, "greatness in art involves losing the sense of 'our personal identity in some object dearer to us than to ourselves'". 2 In a letter to Richard Woodhouse, dated October 27th, 1818, Keats extends Hazlitt's notion into a concept of the poet as being "characteristic":

> A Poet . . . has no Identity - he is continually in for - and filling some other Body - The Sun, the Moon, the Sea and Men and Women who are creatures of impulse are poetical and have about them an unchangeable attribute - the poet has none; no identity . . . 3

As Bate points out, this submergence of the poet's own identity is an important difference between Keats's aesthetic and the notion of the 'egotistical sublime' of Wordsworth and his followers. As Richard Woodhouse wrote to John Taylor about Keats:

1 Bate, p. 249.
2 Bate, p. 259.
3 The Letters of John Keats, p. 387.

I perceive clearly the distinction between himself and those of the Wordsworth School . . . The highest order of Poet will not only possess all the above powers but will have [so] high an imagn that he will be able to throw his own soul into any object he sees or imagines, so as to see feel be sensible of, & express, all that the object itself wod see, feel, be sensible of, or express . . . so that his own self will, with the Exception of the Mechanical part, be "annihilated". 1

These considerations provide a useful background to an examination of the development of Stuart's aesthetic in his early work. Stuart's first published writing was a fragment of an untitled poetic drama which appeared in Aengus[2] (1919). The fragment is headed with a couplet quoted from Yeats:

Thus do the spirits of evil snatch their prey
Almost out of the very hands of God.

The drama consists of dialogue between a child and a small bird who are both watching a hawk hovering in the sky. The hawk is an ambiguous symbol, representing power, beauty and self-sufficiency on the one hand and danger and destruction on the other. It sinks into the sun, which has a purgatorial role, since it is 'that great unfathomable deep/ Where all evil is burnt into good' and returns in a still more terrifying aspect which overpowers child and bird. The fragment ends enigmatically with the stage direction 'There is a screech and a loud clang of wings and a wildness of wind' and the comment 'And such is the terror in every sigh'. Here, there is the idea of the poet seeing beyond ordinary events - a sigh - to the terror which underlies them. The purpose of the piece, though, is to exemplify the emotion and ambiguity of Yeats's couplet. The couplet allows two readings: 'the

1 Bate, p. 261. The abbreviations for 'imagination' and 'would' are given as they appear in the text.

2 H. Stuart, untitled dramatic dialogue, Aengus, [1], no. 1 (Midsummer 1919), unpaginated [p. 4].

spirits of evil' are successful or thwarted according to whether the word 'almost' is taken to qualify them or the hands of God. Similarly, the impact of the hawk on the child and bird may have been to destroy them or it may have been a consummation through a purgatorial fear, like the relationship of the sun and the hawk. The piece could be interpreted as Christian symbolism, with the hawk representing God, child and bird representing man and his soul, and their fear of the hawk symbolising man's fear of God, whose power he approaches finally through death. In this interpretation, the fear of God would be the force which almost snatches man from God, and the overwhelming of bird and child would be a terrible but joyful consummation. Whatever its precise meaning, though, the fragment is interesting for its complexity of emotion and the interest shown in the work of Yeats.

Subsequent numbers of Aengus carried more of Stuart's work. Much of it deals with the idea of a potential for fruitfulness and new life which cannot be realised fully by those who possess it. The two united poems which appear in the second number of Aengus (1919)[1] are concerned with an old man who desires youth and young lovers whose dreams are stolen by a child 'whose hair was paler that the sun-bleached hay' and who 'tossed around the startled room like a leaf'.[2] In fact, the old man carries the symbol of his youth - a white rose - without realising it, and the theft of the lovers' dreams is necessary for them to become aware of their passion. In both poems, the characters are overwhelmed

1 H. Stuart, 'Two Poems', Aengus, [1], no. 2 (December 1919), unpaginated [p. 4].

2 Comparison of the child may be made with Keats's 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci': 'a faery's child,/Her hair was long, her foot was light,/ And her eyes were wild' (Poetical Works, p. 350) and with Yeats's use of the girl-child in, for example, poems such as 'The Host of the Air', 'The Song of Wandering Aengus', 'To A Child Dancing in the Wind.' See The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats, second edition (London, 1950).

by something which they desire but which they cannot fully understand because they are too close to it.[1] The experience, therefore, is an unpleasant one, but Stuart's notion is that it leads to a fruitfulness which would not be possible otherwise. This indicates a crucial difference from Keats's ideas, which develops in Stuart's aesthetic: where Keats sees a hidden destructive ferocity which sickens him, Stuart uses this destruction as the first stage towards some new state.

The three poems published as 'Criminals' in the last number of *Aengus*[2] represent an important advance in Stuart's aesthetic since the protagonists act as well as being acted upon, to find their strange, individual vision. The first poem concerns a beautiful woman who had several lovers; one was a murderer who was hanged and who lies dead in the same place as the woman. The second poem describes the death of the man and his burial. In the third poem, the murderer ties the woman's body to a cross and consigns it to the sea, where it floats for three days until the cords binding it break; the murderer carves a strange epitaph to his victim in the Church:

CRIMINALS

I

She had a number of lovers and one who
Loved her so passionately that the world
Found danger in his eyes ... red, brown, black, blue,

1 This need for both a source of inspiration and a distancing from it may be compared with the duality of attitude in Yeats's verse. In 'To the Rose Upon the Rood of Time', for example, he invokes the Rose but then demands space between it and him so that he can feel 'the rose-breath', that is, so that he is not overwhelmed by the source of his inspiration and thus unable to communicate it:

'Come near, come near, come near, - Ah leave me still
A little space for the rose-breath to fill!
Lest I no more hear common things that crave . . .
And learn to chaunt a tongue men do not know'
(*Collected Poems*, p. 35).

2 H. Stuart, 'Criminals', *Aengus*, New Series [1], no. 4 (July, 1920), 5-6.

Green, purple, gold, they changed and so the world
Brought him away and tied a greasy coat
About his head and a cord round his throat.
He was a murderer I think they said.
The beautiful woman and he both lie here dead.

II

He died a strange death in a far, strange place;
He saw the moon take fire one night and stood
Drinking the white flames with his body and blood;
And when they brought him in his withered face
Hung down between his shoulders like a flower;
Like a faded lily mirrored in a pool
He lay there upside down, until a fool
Passing called out: He's drunk, put him to bed.
They sat and waited for a stupid hour,
Then dug a hole and buried him instead.

III

He tied her long pale body on two boards
And gave them to the waves, and for three days
The waters carried them until the cords
That bound her broke. So where her mother prays
Each Sunday in the church he carved these words:
"I tied her to a cross, and on the third day
She descended into Hell, but she shall rise
To the sea's edge again and rot away.
Who was her lover once writes this and dies."

A reconstruction of the poems would show that the murderer killed the beautiful woman; carried out his strange ritual of crucifixion and consignment to the sea; carved her epitaph in the church; and was apprehended and hanged, the 'stupid hour' being the official waiting time between execution and burial. The organisation of the poems, however, emphasises the third poem's idea of a resurrection of some sort, which, it is implied, will be experienced by the murderer as well as his victim. The nature of that new life is peculiar - after the woman has 'descended into Hell' she 'shall rise/ To the sea's edge again and rot away'. The suggestion is that the body and soul will be separated. The descent into Hell must be a spiritual one, since the physical body will still be in the sea; it is the spirit that will rise again, therefore, and the body that will rot away. In death lies triumph, not defeat, therefore, and both the appalling actions and fate

of the murderer can be perceived as a gateway to discovery of a different truth.

The poems are important to a consideration of Stuart's aesthetics for several reasons. Firstly, criminality and passionate love are considered to be complementary. It is the passion of the murderer, shown by the changing colours of his eyes, that the world finds dangerous, so that he is regarded as a potential criminal even before murder is committed.[1] Secondly, the criminal is supported against the world from which he is alienated. The poet's description of the murderer and his execution indicates understanding of the criminal and a certain contempt for the impersonality, squalor, and stupidity of his executors, who are 'the world' or 'they', have only 'a greasy coat' and 'a cord', and who wait 'a stupid hour'. This is emphasised by the casualness with which the world at large treats the execution. Society's justification for executing him is given in the unsure words of an onlooker who understands the punishment but is doubtful about the crime, answering the unspoken question of 'What did he do?' with the words 'He was a murderer, I think they said'. Further, the nature of death in the poem is unusual. The traditional association of death as an euphemism for sexual consummation[2] is extended so that the murder is committed as an expression of passionate love and intense intimacy. The death of the murderer is an ecstatic experience of beauty and pain which he drinks to the full:

> He saw the moon take fire one night and stood
> Drinking the white flames with his body and blood;
> And when they brought him in his withered face
> Hung down between his shoulders like a flower;
> Like a faded lily mirrored in a pool . . .

1 Compare this with the combination of passion, murder and execution in Oscar Wilde, 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol'.

2 See, for example, John Donne, 'Song'; James Shirley, Cupid and Death; and elsewhere.

The moon, as archetype of female beauty, suggests the beautiful woman and its white flames suggest the purity of the sexual impulse which led to her 'crime' of taking many lovers. This purity is extended to the motives of her murderer in the unexpected image of his face as 'a faded lily'. Both man and woman are connected by these images: the destruction of the moon links up with the withering of the flower; the whiteness of the moon with the implicit but unstated whiteness of the lily. In death they find harmony with each other, the death of the one linking them with the other, reinforcing the idea that death is a means to some mystical end, rather than an end in itself. As well, the spiritual and moral significance of the execution is expanded by the phrase 'body and blood'. The phrase is suggestive of the Eucharist and thus of the notion that Christ, too, was executed ignominiously as a criminal.[1] Christian allusion is extended further by the 'crucifixion' in the third poem, and the unusual resurrection it promises. Again, the implication is of a spiritual code which exists outside the one normally accepted by society, since neither man nor woman have been buried in consecrated ground. The carving of the epitaph in the Church, therefore, is an act of defiance; the resurrection of the girl can give comfort to the mother only if she accepts this code which is, presumably, alien to her and to the orthodox beliefs the Church represents. The criminal outsider in the poems is triumphant and fulfilled, through his crime and through the execution which unites him with his victim, so that even his punishment becomes a victory.

'Criminals' extends Stuart's aesthetic into interesting new areas.

1 The idea of the close association between Christ and certain sorts of criminals appears elsewhere in Stuart's work. In Black List, Section H, p. 140, for example, H thinks:

> Christ had held the most forward position of His time for several hours. And it would fall to the condemned, the sick-unto-death and perhaps a handful of unregarded artists to defend these areas of consciousness in the coming days as best they could.

The idea of a reality beyond the commonplace one has been extended into an understanding of a mentality which would be considered mad by normal standards, and Stuart's sympathies are shown to lie with the criminal outsider.[1] Mystical allusion is personalised and operates on a base which is unusual but identifiably Christian. Importantly, too, the protagonist is able to act as well as to be acted on, and can realise his ultimate aims through his own actions. One problem remains, however. The final expression of the murderer's vision was the death of himself and the woman, and their joining in some sort of resurrection. In this lay their ultimate spiritual truth. At the same time, though, they were forced into this by the lack of any alternative ways of reaching such harmony, and brilliantly effective though it is in this particular case, violent death is clearly inadequate as a general expression of spiritual completion. Although Stuart's characters had successfully reached what Keats calls the 'Penetralium of mystery' it was necessary for Stuart to find ways of achieving a similar end without the total destruction of his characters.

Between 1920 and 1924 Stuart published in various periodicals and produced his book of verse, We Have Kept The Faith. A short prose piece, entitled 'In Church', shows his continuing concern with the outsider and uses the symbol of cooking a fish which is developed later in Stuart's novels. The village idiot, John, is in Church and the sermon in progress is ironically contrasted with his thoughts. His perception of Christ is touchingly simple and personal:

1 Something of this can be found in Rimbaud's Une Saison en Enfer, where the narrator is possessed by madness and finds companionship in execution, disaster and criminality: 'J'ai appelé les bourreaux pour, en périssant, mordre la crosse de leurs fusils. J'ai appelé les fléaux, pour m'étouffer avec le sable, le sang. Le malheur a été mon dieu. Je me suis allongé dans la boue. Je me suis séché à l'air du crime. Et j'ai joué de bons tours à la folie.' [I called to my executioners to let me bite the ends of their guns, as I died. I called to all plagues to stifle me with sand and blood. Disaster was my god. I stretched out in mud. I dried myself in criminal air. I played clever tricks on insanity.] Oeuvres Complètes, p. 93.

'O Lord Jesus,' he murmured, 'lift me up into the great room that is always full of sun and straw and away from all that is noisy and dark. Every morning, Lord Jesus, I will fry a fish for your breakfast when I do one for myself and I swear that it shall not be badly done if you grant me this thing, my Saviour.' 1

John's God is a personal one, available through simple, everyday tasks. The spiritual potency of his promise to fry a fish for Jesus's breakfast is shown by the account in the Gospel of St John of the appearance of Jesus to the apostles at the Sea of Tiberias after his resurrection. There, Jesus grilled fish for the apostles' breakfast, a potent renewal of this promise to provide for His followers and a powerful symbol of The Last Supper and The Crucifixion.[3] The apostle John was 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'[4] and the implication is that the idiot John is his spiritual descendant. Clearly his vision of Christ in simple, homely terms is an accurate one; Stuart returns to Christ at the Sea of Tiberias several times in his novels, using it as an symbol of spirituality and loving-kindness conjoined.[5] What is especially interesting, though, is that the new spiritual state is seen in communicable terms; although physical death is still a prerequisite of a new spiritual life, here it is imaged in the terms of physical life. The implication is that the two are not completely mutually exclusive but that some third state containing elements of both may be possible.

We Have Kept The Faith (1924) explores these ideas further. The theme which harmonises the book of verse is that of intense emotion, which is felt, lost, and recollected. The emotion may spring from an

1 H. Stuart, 'In Church', Aengus, New Series [1], no. 4 (July 1920), p. 2-3.
2 John 21. 1-24.
3 The fish was a commonly used symbol of Christ amongst early Christians. Its source is the Greek word for fish, 'ichthys', which was used as an acronym for 'Iesous Christos, Theou Uios, Soter' - 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.'
4 John 21. 7.
5 See, for example, The Flowering Cross p. 116; Memorial, p. 133. The spiritual potency of small domestic incidents is important to Stuart's work - see, for example, Mrs. Darnell's appreciation of their nurturing quality in The Chariot, p. 29.

insane love, as in 'Criminals',[1] which is reprinted here. Alternatively, it may be an overwhelming of the poet by a personified natural beauty, as in the poem 'Spring Rain':

Spring streams upon me, lovely, pitiful;
Over the earthly heart the floral tide
Sends little noiseless waves as in the lull
Of after-storm upon a dark seaside. [2]

Elsewhere, it is a more sexual love, as in 'Chryse',[3] or a powerful evocation of death, as in 'Bull Fight',[4] or a combination of both into symbols of each other, as in 'The End of the World':

I think that after death I will be wrecked upon you
So close, so suddenly that I'll forget
Your eyes, your hair, when the last lark is gone. You,
Will you remember how we watched the great hours pass
To blacken out the sun, fainting amid the grass? [5]

Like 'For A Dancer II', the poems in the collection have identifiable influences from the Georgian, Imagist and Aesthetic movements, and from the work of W.B. Yeats. An extension of rural settings and imagery is clearly present in 'Spring Rain', for example, while 'Cockrow'[6] uses the sharp visual perception and exclusion of discourse associated with Imagism:

Cockrow

The black cock stretched his wing
  Against the shell of the moon,
And the moon like a broken thing
  Became no longer moon.

1919

1 We Have Kept The Faith, p. 25.
2 We Have Kept The Faith, p. 9.
3 We Have Kept The Faith, p. 33.
4 We Have Kept The Faith, p. 12.
5 We Have Kept The Faith, p. 29.
6 We Have Kept The Faith, p. 19.

The influence of the exotic imagery, combination of sensual language and desperation, and ornate diction which is associated with some work of the so-called 'Decadent' poets is most apparent in the poem 'Decadence':[1]

Decadence

Morpheus who swoops from midnight over grass
And languid tides that fail on a dim shoal
With mermaid whisper, and the clouds that pass
With a slow grace till one too langourous goes
Soft crying into earth with autumn rose
And everlasting sun flower, mortal pale:-
These have I madly wooed, these break my heart,
These lure me on and draw my steps apart,
These fling me down love's everlasting fall.

April, 1921.

The image of the rose used by Stuart in some poems in the collection is most suggestive of some of Yeats's verse. 'Rose Without End', for example, recalls the opening of Yeats's poem 'To The Rose Upon the Rood of Time':

Rose without end, the lilt of laughter falls
About us in this little room, and voices
Rise swaying to the rhythm of our breath;
Rose without end, there is no voice that calls
Me on or back . . . [2]

There is an important difference between the role of the author in these poems and Keats's notion of the poet. As W. J. Bate suggests, Keats is concerned with the process of 'negating one's own ego' in order that his idea of Negative Capability may be fully realised. Although this idea seems to have some similarity with Stuart's idea of a 'death of the self' it is clear that the two concepts are rather different. In We Have Kept The Faith Stuart is concerned to recollect and describe

1 We Have Kept The Faith, p. 39.
2 We Have Kept The Faith, p. 13. See also p. 29 'The End of the World', where a tearful lover is 'Like a rose under the rain'; and p. 31, 'dreams' where it symbolises lost youth: 'Youth and the misery of youth are over,/ The roses droop in her poor torn hand'.

emotions and events rather than to be absorbed into them. There is a self-awareness, a consciousness of emotion which prevents a total absorption although it does not prevent total involvement. For Keats, the poet has 'no identity' since 'he is continually in for - and filling some other Body'. For Stuart, however, the poet is always aware of his identity and though he may submerge himself in other things it is to partake of them rather than to become them. This is shown most clearly here, in the dramatic dialogue between Dido and Aeneas which concludes We Have Kept The Faith.[1] Dido and Aeneas discuss their love, which is subject to the whim of Aeneas's mother, Juno, as they take shelter in a cave from a storm. As they talk, the storm continues unabated but the darkness of the cave becomes less heavy as their eyes become used to it and the oppressive atmosphere lifts. Dido says:

> The coolness comes from inward.
> Still without the trees wave frenzied branches,
> The lightnings grow e'en redder, or the gloom
> Behind them more intense . . . [2]

Symbolically, this piece suggests the removal of the poet's consciousness from the outside world to an inner world. The cave represents a retreat from direct, overwhelming experience into a perception which is no less intense but which leaves the poet freedom to select and judge experience. In terms of the poem, he can be close to the storm raging outside the cave while experiencing the coolness which comes from within the cave. The poem shows the development in Stuart's aesthetics of an emotional control, an involvement with his subject which is voluntary and which comes from a secure intellectual, emotional and spiritual base.[3] In 'Criminals' this detachment from

1 We Have Kept The Faith, p. 45-51.
2 We Have Kept The Faith, p.50
3 The idea clearly owes something to Plato's famous description of man moving from a cave to sunlight as a symbol of his search for truth; in a sense, Stuart's metaphor is a reversal of Plato's.

reality was achieved only through an annihilating madness; here, it is possible on some different basis.

The nature of that state which allowed choice of involvement is explored further in 'Introduction to a Spiritual Poem' (1924)[1]:

INTRODUCTION TO A SPIRITUAL POEM

Beauty was in her like the moon in the sky
Evoe Lavalliere had left her house
And friends and youthful glory
Had passed by
Music and passion with averted head
On roads that had the color of a mouse.
Not for the sake of the dead
That lure more passionately than very passion,
Not for Christ's sake
Her beauty was not His,
O she had drowned herself in a grey lake
Last night after the very latest fashion
After the last sealed promise,
The last kiss.

Now let us follow carefully the course
Her beauty followed after it was free.
The moon let loose at dawn
From its dark prison has not such recourse
At her command as Evoe's soul, for she
Had lived so variously,
Had been so torn
Between this mood and that that now she had
A choice between much goodness and much bad.

The subject of the poem, Evoe Lavalliere, may be identified with Ève Lavalliere (1866-1929), a rich man's mistress and popular actress who gave up her stage career for a religious vocation.[2] The importance of the poem lies in the choice which Stuart feels she was able to make. Because she has 'lived so variously' with such a range of emotion. 'torn/ Between this mood and that', she has a stand point from which to select a life of either 'much goodness' or 'much bad'. The symbolic

1 H. Stuart, 'Introduction to a Spiritual Poem', Transatlantic Review, 2, no. 4 (October 1924), 354.
2 For an account of her life see L. L. MacReavy, A Modern Magdalen: Ève Lavalliere 1866-1929 (London, 1934).

value of Dido and Aeneas's cave has been translated into ethical terms, therefore, and the possibilities available become a matter of choice rather than an experience imposed by external forces. 'Good' and 'bad' are not defined however, and the identification of Lavalliere as 'a modern Magdalen' introduces an interesting ambiguity. Although Mary Magdalen stood by Christ's cross, went to anoint his body at the tomb, and met the risen Christ at the tomb, she was also identified with the woman who was a sinner, who anointed Christ's feet in the house of Simon.[1] She combines sacred and profane love, therefore, and thus calls into question accepted notions of goodness. The implication is that the standpoint required to be aware of the choices of action available is reached through unconventional means, and by unconventional people. This is the first of the allusions to Mary Magdalen and Magdalen figures in Stuart's work and to their complex mystical natures.[2]

* * * * * * *

The idea of a neutral standpoint which allows choice to be made and which preserves the identity of the poet, thus allowing him to experience states rather than being obliterated by them, is expanded in 'A Note on Jacob Boehme' in the first number of To-morrow.[3] In a sense, the note is a mystical statement of Einstein's theory of relativity, that it must be possible to express the physical laws governing the motion of a body in a manner which is independent of the motion of any observer who may be studying the body. Stuart begins with a passage from Jacob Boehme's Threefold life of Man:

1 See The Oxford Dictionary of Saints, edited by D. H. Farmer (Oxford, 1978), p. 270: 'This identification, propounded by Gregory the Great, but now rejected by the Roman Calendar, was accepted in the traditional cult of Mary Magdalen and by the artists who depicted her'.

2 See, for example, The Pillar of Cloud, p. 142; Memorial, p. 16, for further examples.

3 H. Stuart, 'A Note on Jacob Boehme', To-morrow, edited by H. Stuart and Cecil Salkeld, 1, no. 1 (August 1924), 5.

In Heaven, where good alone manifests, all that which - if manifested - would manifest as evil is always kept in the hiddenness. On Earth, where the conditions of Heaven are reversed, the law is that what we would be recognised as possessing in Heaven, we must be content to seem not to possess while on earth. 1

Stuart argues that Boehme has missed the important point that Heaven and Earth are 'simply man's broken conception of the Divine "One"', and continues:

If these two, then, are in reality one, there should therefore be certain Heavenly traces about us - that is, it ought to be possible to understand and perceive the working of Heavenly Law. 2

Stuart found this perception in some poetry and especially in Aristotle, whom he quotes:

"There is, then, something which is always moved with an unceasing motion: and that motion is a circle; and this is plain, not by reasoning only, but in fact: so that the first Heaven must be eternal. But since a mover which is moved is an intermediate, there must be also some mover which is unmoved ("in the hiddenness," according to Boehme, and a negatively charged nucleus in the Atomic Theory), eternal, existing as substance and actuality." 3

Here, Stuart is concerned with the point from which it is possible to understand the working of 'the Heavenly Law': the unmoving point in Aristotle, the 'hiddenness' of Boehme, and the 'negatively charged nucleus in the Atomic Theory'. He argues that if Boehme's misconception of a division between earthly and heavenly states is avoided, then the qualities of good and evil which are manifest in Heaven and Earth, are united as two halves of the same thing. By understanding and perceiving them, therefore, it is possible to understand and perceive the working of 'the Heavenly Law'. This is an extension of Evoe Lavalliere's experience of 'goodness' and 'bad'; there, the two qualities were seen as complementary, whereas here they are necessary halves of the same

1 'A Note on Jacob Boehme'.
2 'A Note on Jacob Boehme'.
3 'A Note on Jacob Boehme'.

manifestation. It suggests more forcibly, therefore, that a true and complete perception of the physical and spiritual world can be achieved only through the knowledge of good and evil, and stresses more strongly the complex relationship between them. Again, it indicates a difference between Keats's and Stuart's aesthetics. As Bate points out, in Keats's poetic vision, 'the irrelevant and discordant (the "disagreeables") "evaporate" . . . Hence "Truth" and "Beauty" spring simultaneously into being'. Stuart, however, argues that the 'disagreeables' must exist in conjunction with absolute goodness, that they define each other, and that they are indivisible, therefore. Further, rather than the poet's self being submerged by his apprehension of them, Stuart is concerned to define a third point of stasis relative to these qualities which can be occupied, and through which some kind of permanence and understanding can be found.

The editorial written by Stuart for the second number of To-morrow provides further illumination.[1] In it, he refers to the controversy which surrounded the first number, and defends the paper by saying that 'The belief we had set ourselves as a star by which this paper was to be guided was belief in the immortality of the soul'.[2] He then goes on to discuss the relationship between the paper's intentions and the response it evoked. They are compared with the stars on one hand, and the navigation lights on the other, that give guidance to sailors. However, the stars, which represent universal and spiritual qualities, may not always be distinguishable from the night, which represents personal, mundane qualities, since 'it is possible that distant lights may become

1 H. Stuart, 'In the Hour Before Dawn', To-morrow, edited by H. Stuart, 1, no. 2 (September 1924), 4.

2 'In the Hour Before Dawn'. The allusion is to the editorial of the first number, written by W.B. Yeats, which stated 'No man can create, as did Shakespeare, Homer, Sophocles, who does not believe, with all his blood and nerve, that man's soul is immortal, for the evidence lies plain to all men that where that belief has declined, men have turned from creation to photography'. To-morrow (August 1924), p. 4.

confused with stars'.[1] There is a deliberate blurring of the difference between the two sets of qualities, so that they are indistinguishable from each other. The only recourse, therefore, is to 'sail on guided by this belief as though it were a star in the heavens',[2] that is, to cease to try to separate the two qualities of 'worldly light and heavenly star' and to treat them as a single thing, a star in the heavens. Clearly there is some sense of the interdependence of good and evil expressed in the note on Boehme, in this idea of the unity of the spiritual and the mundane.

Stuart continues his image of writers as sailors by saying that 'The ocean is dark. Whatever star it is by which we sail is a star set in the night of the soul'.[3] The soul, then, is both dark, like the ocean, but also contains a guiding star. However, these two things are not in opposition to each other, nor are they each other's contrary halves. Rather, they are different expressions of the same thing, the darkness representing goodness as does the star: 'this very darkness . . . in itself is but natural, or, as some say, supernatural, and thus both good and beautiful'.[4] 'Star' and 'darkness' are then re-expressed as 'day' and 'night' to make clear the idea that although they have no separate qualities of their own they can release different potentials in man:

> 'in the night of the soul, it is then that the soul is bartered, saints stoned to death by a whole people or excommunicated by a whole church, commercial wars fought out by nations. It is not the night that is evil but, forces that uprise out of a quiescent consciousness that is akin to sleep . . . And through these nights all that may have been beautiful and glorious in the day recedes, as it were, into hiddenness. For beauty, as the phoenix, can only live through being reborn, that is, through what we call death and rebirth.' [5]

1 'In the Hour Before Dawn'.
2 'In the Hour Before Dawn'.
3 'In the Hour Before Dawn'.
4 'In the Hour Before Dawn'.
5 'In the Hour Before Dawn'.

'The night of the soul' may be horrifying, therefore, but is a necessary, purgative horror, which leads to the 'day', through a movement between spiritual 'death and rebirth'. The notion here is clearly the mystical one of 'the dark night of the soul' which leads to a new spiritual state. Finally, Stuart clarifies the relationship of these contrary qualities:

> This vitality that is known as beauty springs from the workings of positive and negative forces. Outside this law it could not be. That is far from saying that beauty is dependent upon ugliness for its being, or good upon evil, but simply that beauty in a world whose basis in "contrariety" must at certain definite times appear to us to be darkened, must turn, as it were, its other face to the sun. [1]

Beauty is not absent but 'darkened', present in another aspect, equally vital but quite different. The understanding of this provides the point of stasis from which these universal, apparently separate but really integrated qualities can be perceived. Positive and negative forces constitute what he called 'the Heavenly law' in the note on Boehme, and both may recede 'into the hiddenness'. It is necessary to be aware of this relationship in order to utilise them on a personal level, to penetrate through them to some absolute state. This process of penetration is the task of the writer; it is for this that he is, in Stuart's imagery, navigating through the darkness. The 'books written by men who were struck with the blinding heavens'[2] are the physical expression of an experience which has led to a state of understanding of these spiritual truths. This state is that of redemption.

It is useful at this point to make some very brief comparison between Stuart's idea of 'contrariety' and W.B. Yeats's of 'antimonies'.[3] The influence of Boehme on William Blake and through

1 'In the Hour Before Dawn'.
2 'In the Hour Before Dawn'.
3 See Richard Ellmann, Yeats: the Man and the Masks (London, 1949) for a full discussion of the idea of the reconciliation of opposing qualities which, Ellmann argues, structures Yeat's work.

Blake on Yeats, is well attested.[1] In Boehme, Blake 'found support for his idea of the 'contraries' that are immanent in all of life and organise being into creative polar wisdom'.[2] In The Marriage of Heaven and Hell Blake:

> wanted as did his disciple Yeats, to get beyond good and evil. He wanted not only to redeem the contraries from their distorted state as Good and Evil in materialistic, rationalized religion, but also to show the way to a knowledge of the real ground in which the contraries in human life would be seen as creative rather than destructive; and that ground was the imagination that connected man with God. [3]

In Yeats's A Vision[4], the interpenetrating gyres represent change and opposite qualities, which are necessary to universal unity. So, 'the individual soul is awakened by a violent oscillation (one thinks of Verlaine oscillating between the church and the brothel) until it sinks in on that Whole where the contraries are united, the antinomies resolved.'[5] The attempts of both Blake and Yeats to reconcile these opposite qualities in some universally expressive way, led to an increasingly complex, esoteric, and very heavily symbolic personal philosophy. There are difficulties, therefore, in making detailed comparisons between Blake's Prophetic Books, Yeats's A Vision, and Stuart's aesthetics. However, two major differences are apparent. First, rather than seeking universal significance, Stuart looked for an intimate, personal expression of his ideas; the grilling of the fish, for example, or the writer's book. Second, rather than developing an organised abstract system of thought he depended on the instinctive apprehension of spiritual truth through relatively mundane experience - in a poem entitled 'By the Waterfall', for instance, vulnerability and

1 See, for example, M. K. Nurmi, William Blake (London, 1975), p. 21, 70-76.
2 William Blake, p. 21.
3 William Blake, p. 74.
4 W.B. Yeats, A Vision, corrected second edition (London, 1962).
5 A Vision, p. 89.

suffering are evoked by a rabbit trapped in the middle of a stream.[1] Connections between Stuart's and Yeats's work can be made by their collaboration on the editorial of the first number of To-morrow; through external events, such as Stuart's membership of the Irish Academy of Letters;[2] and through allusions to Yeats in Stuart's early writing. In more fundamental ways, however, their ideas are separate, and Stuart's aesthetics are independent of Yeats's, not derivative.

Similarly, there are important differences between the ideas of Keats and Stuart. Both share the dilemma of seeing reality in an unusual, heightened way, but while Keats is sickened by its horror, Stuart attempts to use it to gain access to a different consciousness - the madness of the murderer in 'Criminals', for example. As well, their understanding of the relationship between the self and poetic composition differ. Keats's notion is that the 'disagreeables' evaporate to leave Beauty and Truth. In Stuart's work though, the presence and nature of such elements is important. Keats is concerned to become the thing he conceives, to 'fill some other Body' which his empathic imagination has made representative of Beauty and Truth. Stuart, however, wishes to find a vantage point from which 'contraries' can be understood, a 'point of stasis' relative to them but separated from their conflict. Finally, his changed state is only temporary for Keats, a means of perceiving the sublime which is followed by a return to more usual states - truths are 'snatched' from the Penetralium of

1 H. Stuart, 'By the Waterfall', Poetry: A Magazine of Verse, 29, no. 1 (October 1926), 30. The rabbit introduces the motif of the hare which is developed later in Stuart's work.

2 H. Stuart, 'A letter to a young lady, more sincere than most letters, yet not entirely so', Aengus, New Series [1], no. 4 (July 1920), p. 1 is a humorous satire on affected, fin de siècle prose, in which reference is made to "the 'Responsibilities' of Mr Yeats". The typescript of a play by H Stuart, entitled The Player King, is held by Trinity College Library, University of Dublin (TCD MSS 4630-49, no. 4431). It is a one-act romantic comedy, set in Spain 'at a forgotten time'. It is possible that the title, at least, may owe something to Yeats's play The Player Queen.

Mystery. Stuart, however, is concerned to move from his apprehension of 'contraries' into a full involvement with them, to produce a permanently altered third state, the state which has been called redemption. It is for this reason that, in the imagery used in 'In the Hour Before Dawn', the writer is a sailor navigating his ship by what he believes to be a star, through the night; eventually, the sailor/writer must produce a book which will be the result of his understanding and participating in the qualities of the star and night which has been called the redemptive state.

The term 'redemption' is first used by Stuart in this sense in Mystics and Mysticism. In his discussion, Stuart suggests that under the right circumstances suffering can lead to redemption:

> For suffering of itself has no power; but when it is the outcome of love, that is to say when it is patiently and even joyously borne for love of Him, He has given to it a little of that virtue of redemption which his own suffering had. [1]

The difference here between suffering and suffering borne of love is similar to the distinction drawn between 'the forces that uprise out of a quiescent consciousness' and 'the night of the soul', in 'In the Hour Before Dawn'. 'Suffering' and 'the forces' are negative and destructive; they bear only a surface resemblance to suffering 'borne for love' and 'the dark night of the soul' both of which are positive and fruitful. Exposure of the self to suffering of the creative sort 'draws the soul toward God and unites it to Him in a union surpassing words to express'.[2] In Stuart's work for such a union to take place it is necessary first of all to be able to perceive the courses of action available. Like Lavalliere, it is necessary to understand the nature of

1 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 18.
2 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 19.

both good and bad, to have some independent point of observation, before action can be taken. Only then is it possible to take the risks, undergo the suffering, that leads to the sense of reintegration and union with a higher reality which constitutes redemption.

This idea of redemption, which structures all of Stuart's work, is developed with remarkable consistency in his novels. In The Angel of Pity, for example, the narrator-hero says:

> No artist can interpret life in the tragic sense except he himself has suffered deeply. But any artist can evoke the vague wistfulness, the nebulous self-pity that may sometimes pass as an insight into the tragedy of life. 1

In Black List, Section H, H sees isolation as the experience which will provide the new inner condition necessary to the creative artist:

> He believed that nothing short of the near despair of being utterly cast off from society and its principles could create the inner condition conducive to the new insights that it was the task of the poet to reveal. 2

Stuart's notion that 'contrarieties' are complementary is important here, since it is through isolation that reintegration, and 'new insights' are found. Common notions of good and bad have to be redefined in this scheme of things; so, in The Pillar of Cloud it is possible for a character to be described as 'completely innocent. Or some might say completely depraved'. 3 Similarly, the poem 'Criminals' suggests that spiritual potency may lie in criminality of a certain sort, and the use of the Magdalen figure suggests that sacred and sensual love might somehow be related. These ideas, developed in

1 The Angel of Pity, p. 115.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 44.
3 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 227.

Stuart's early work, are elaborated in his novels through the themes which recur in them. Like the aesthetics they illustrate, these themes are unusual and individual and before proceeding to a detailed analysis of them, it is useful to examine them briefly against the background of other contemporary preoccupations.

* * * * * * *

Although Stuart began writing novels in the 1930s, therefore, the similarities between his work and that of other Thirties writers is limited. He may have used preoccupations common to that period as a starting point for his work, but the imaginative values he finds in them are different from those usually ascribed. Both Pigeon Irish and The Coloured Dome, for example, are concerned with Ireland in a military struggle to preserve her identity, as is the work of writers such as Daniel Corkery and Brinsley MacNamara.[1] In Stuart's novels, however, there is no celebration of the nationalist movement or of the hero as part of a group with shared ideals. Instead, the heroes of his work become separated from the aims of the guerilla groups to which they belong at first and find a purely personal fulfilment through isolation and introspection. As well, although the literature and culture of the Thirties is discussed in several authoritative works,[2] no extensive description or analysis of the themes used by Stuart has been produced.

It is not imperative, therefore, to attempt a comparative analysis

1 For example, Daniel Corkery, The Hounds of Banba (Dublin and Cork, 1920); Brinsley MacNamara, The Clanking of Chains (Dublin, 1920). Other interesting differences include attitudes to new technology, which is celebrated in verse such as W.H. Auden's 'Night Mail' and Stephen Spender's 'The Express', but which is often regarded by Stuart as a sinister, de-humanizing force - in The Angel of Pity, for instance, the enemy force is 'a mechanized nation' (p.12); and the unusual combination of sacred and sensual love in Stuart's work which presents novels such as Women and God as identifiable with the so-called 'Catholic novel'.

2 See, for example, Bernard Bergonzi, Reading the Thirties (London, 1978); Stephen Spender The Thirties and After (London, 1978); Julian Symons, The Thirties: A Dream Revolved (London, 1960).

at present, although such an analysis would be interesting and illuminating since it would provide a broader context for the examination of Stuart's novels. For example, it would have to concern itself with the accuracy of generalisations about writers of that period such as the term 'Audenesque' suggests, and the relationship of these influences to those of works such as Virginia Woolf, The Waves (1931), James Joyce, Finnegans Wake (1939) and Samuel Beckett, Murphy (1938). It would be necessary to examine the social and cultural backgrounds of both English and Irish writers, especially, perhaps, in relation to international events such as the Spanish Civil War and the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939. It would be necessary to analyse the differences between certain coteries, such as Group Theatre and Unity Theatre, New Verse and Left Review writers, and the relative importance given by them to aesthetic or social values, as well as their relationship to each other. Similarly in Ireland the impact of political developments on literature would require attention.[1] The impact of the Easter Rising and its aftermath would clearly be important, as would the conflict between the Free State and the Republican party. Stuart refers to both in his novels[2] and an analysis of the relationship between Irish politics and literature with special reference to Stuart's involvement would be useful and interesting. It has been suggested that after the formation of the Free State and especially after De Valera took power in 1932, there was a period of general disillusionment which was reflected in the

1 Interesting discussions of this issue and its implications are provided by Richard Fallis, The Irish Renaissance (New York, 1977) and Peter Costello, The Heart Grown Brutal (Dublin, 1977).

2 The High Consistory, p. 169-171 contains an imaginary interview between the hero of the novel and Pearse. Fighting in Ireland is important too in several novels: it forms the main action of Pigeon Irish and The Coloured Dome and is referred to in Things To Live For, p. 42-9 and Black List, Section H, p. 72-118.

literature of that time.[1] This is reflected, the argument goes, in work such as that by O'Casey - The Plough and the Stars (1926), for example, in which the words of Padraic Pearse coming through a pub window are to be equated with the drunken brawl inside - and Denis Johnston's The Old Lady Says No! (1929).[2] According to one historian, this disillusionment was the result of a social and cultural conservatism which was the inevitable lot of the Free State:

> When it is . . . recognized that much of the cultural flowering of earier years had been the product of an invigorating clash between representatives of Anglo-Ireland . . . and an emergent nationalist Ireland at a time when it had seemed to sensitive and imaginative individuals that an independent future would require complex accommodations of Irish diversity, it can be readily understood why the foundation of the Irish Free State saw a reduction in adventurous social and cultural experiment. The social homogeneity of the twenty-six counties no longer demanded such imaginatively comprehensive visions.
>
> When it is finally understood that this homogenous Irish Society in the twenty-six county state was predominantly rural in complexion and that Irish rural life was marked by a profound continuity with the social patterns and attitudes of the latter half of the nineteenth century, then it becomes even clearer why independent Ireland was dominated by an overwhelming social and cultural conservatism. [3]

Assuming the accuracy of this analysis, the precise way in which these influences affected Irish Literature in general and Stuart's work in particular, and why they did so, offers an intriguing study. Factors such as these might offer reasons for the extremely serious intent of some of Stuart's novels, such as The Angel of Pity (1935) or the flippancy of other novels, such as In Search of Love, published in the same year. This sort of enquiry would also have to take into account influences on the dissemination of literature in Ireland such as the Censorship Board set up in 1929, and the formation of the Irish Academy

1 For example, Fallis, p. 204 'Disillusionment and disaffection [were] . . . repetitive themes'; Gwynn, p. 207 'When a race finds itself condemned to an inferior status, and distrusted, there is a perpetual tendency towards exaggerating its claim to full right; and exaggeration in the long run breeds a bitter scepticism'.

2 See Fallis, p. 179-202.

3 Terence Brown, Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922-79 (London, 1981), p. 18.

of Letters[1] as a response to this by some Irish writers, including Francis Stuart. As well, it would be necessary to ask what Irish writers were influenced by, for example, Ulysses, or European movements in literature, and how that influence showed itself. It might be possible to make a distinction between writing influenced by the new European modernism, and writing subscribing to an anti-intellectual, peasant-oriented nationalism;[2] or, if this could not be argued, a divergence in subject might be apparent, between for example, the growing urban life of the city and the traditional, intellectually simple life of the small farm.[3] Such a distinction, too, would have to take account of works such as Ernie O'Malley's On Another Man's Wound (1936),[4] his memoir of the war against the British which is an important first-hand account that does not fall into either category. Finally, perhaps, such an inquiry would need to explain and define the contention that, for most Irish writers, the novel form was unsuccessful and unpopular, both in general and in the 1930s in particular:

> to be honest the novel is not a form that has been practiced with any more than a sporadic success in Ireland. Many reasons could be brought forth to explain the shortage of good Irish novels: the lack of a

1 Costello, p. 186, points out the varying cultural and political affiliations of the Academy's membership, without, however, suggesting how that might affect the way in which the literature of the period might be viewed:

> five were former members of Sinn Fein, the IRA, or had fought in the Troubles: Gogarty, O'Connor, O'Donnel, O'Faolain, Francis Stuart, leaving aside Yeats's early membership of the IRB. Eight others had written in support of Irish nationalist ideas; Colum, Higgins, Moore, O'Flaherty, O'Sullivan, George Russell, Shaw and Yeats himself. Of the remaining nine members, some like Forrest Reid were apolitical while St. John Irvine was the only Unionist; some of the rest, including George Moore and Austin Clarke, were of nationalist Catholic caste; others, like Lennox Robinson and Edith Somerville, Protestants definite in their Irishness. This constituted a very mixed and representative group of people ranging from the far left (Peador O'Donnel) to the extreme right (Yeats).

2 See Fallis, p. 233-63.

3 See Brown, p. 79-101.

4 Ernie O'Malley, On Another Man's Wound (London, 1936).

clearly defined class system, something that almost always strengthens English fiction; the conservatism and rigidity of Irish society; the lack, in postrevolutionary Ireland, of any really compelling and big themes. Whatever the reasons, the novels are in short supply, but the short stories are there in abundance. 1

According to this, Stuart came to novel-writing when his contemporaries were leaving it as a prose-form. Stuart himself suggests that his change from poetry to prose was the result of an inner conviction that fiction would be a better mode of expression; it is necessary to ask, though, how far he might have been influenced by a literary milieu, the identity of that milieu, and how that might account for him using the novel-form when it was becoming unpopular.[2]

Such a discussion is not appropriate in this context, however, since part of the purpose of this investigation is to provide material to be used in future inquiries into those areas, rather than to pre-empt them. Instead, it is necessary to examine the themes used by Stuart to define and elaborate the aesthetics implicit in his earlier work. Once they have been established some degree of understanding of Stuart's literary contexts at least, might be sought through an examinaton of areas such as his use of symbolism, the relationship of his work to biography, and the style of his work. The interrelationship of the major themes used by Stuart will be examined, therefore. They are: gambler, artist, and ordinary man; mystic and criminal; sacred and profane love; and the relationship between these themes and spiritual and mundane qualities.

1 Fallis, p. 222.
2 In 'An Interview', p. 24, Stuart says:

> it took me some years to realize that I wasn't essentially a poet, that my real interests were far more in certain experiences - very often personal experiences, human relationships, human activities - which are certainly not best communicated through poetry . . . my whole attitude to communicating whatever insights I have was that of writer of fiction.

At the end of Black List, Section H, H sits in his cell waiting, without being sure exactly what he is waiting for, beyond realising that 'It might be a howl of final despair or the profound silence might be broken by certain words that he didn't yet know how to listen for'.[1] This is the result of H's search for a higher experience and is the first stage of what has been described as 'redemption'. The point is, though, that his redemption is by no means a certain thing; H might hear the 'certain words' or he might meet only 'final despair', since part of the mystical experience is a step into uncertainty. That step is, in mystical terms, part of the death of the self, necessary before redemptive insight can be found, and in order for it to be a true death it must have an element of uncertainty since belief has no potency, no real existence, outside uncertainty. The mystic gambles on his belief, staking everything on one throw, as H does: the result may be despair or joy, or even one followed by the other, and there is no certainty of the issue. All that he can be sure of is that the courting of extreme experience, the deliberate leap into involvement with it, will bring some sort of knowledge, even if it is a terrifying sense of universal emptiness and death. Every mystic is a gambler, therefore, and they are frequently closely connected. The risks which the gambler and mystic take, and the insights they gain, are analagous, for H, with the attitudes which the creative artist must possess. In that sense, his race-going is a sort of training for the experiences he must undergo in order to write as he wishes:

> He knew that in racing, especially in buying the filly, he was seeking a substitute for the more vital risks that he didn't yet know how to

1 Black List, Section H, p. 425.

take, even if he had the courage to.

He'd guessed for sometime now that it was only through surviving perilous situations, such as his father, Lane and the others hadn't survived, that he'd gain the insights he needed to reach whatever degree of psychic and imaginative depths he was capable of, and be able to communicate these in his fiction. [1]

Here, it is made clear that the creative artist must always be a gambler of some sort. Gambling is not a phase he passes through on the way to achieving artistry; rather, horse-racing is a stage in his experience which leads to more dangerous gambles, the 'vital risks' and 'perilous situations' which are necessary for artistic insight. This risk-taking is part of the process which, in Things To Live For, is called 'opening one's arms to life' and which brings 'the ultimate peace and security'.[2] It demonstrates the need for total involvement of the writer in the creative process, which Wilson describes as 'writing . . . as an instrument for living'.[3] In Black List, Section H, H expands on this idea when he is visiting W. B. Yeats:

On one of the last evenings H came up with a view of the writer's situation that he'd been keeping in store.

"It's that he must be doubly involved."

"Doubly involved?"

The eagle glance, the quick withdrawal, the moment of charged silence with leonine mane pushed back.

"It's the writer who's one with his work, and doesn't create it as a thing apart, as a beautiful artifice outside himself, as, say, Synge does, who says the things that now matter most." [4]

For H, then, as for the narrator of Things To Live For, there must be a complete commitment to exposing the self to risk, shock, and loss, so that fruitful insight can be gained. Gambler and artist, therefore, are closely linked, and are separated by their desire for risk from other

1 Black List, Section H, p. 225.
2 Things To Live For, p. 11-12.
3 The Outsider, p. 70.
4 Black List, Section H, p. 145.

men, businessmen especially.

By contrast, the businessman is almost always associated with 'the respectable dead'. He 'gambles' only on certainties and his actions are more properly defined as investing or speculating, that is, working on the fairly sure knowledge that in the fullness of time his money will increase and return to him. It is not that this is shown as being essentially bad in Stuart's novels; rather it is a shameful waste of time, a pouring of energy into something which is sterile, at the expense of some more vital activity, a pursuit of prudence, not the extreme experience that is the only thing that can lead to a full spiritual self-knowledge and thus a full life. At one point in Black List, Section H, H becomes a chicken-farmer, deserting his study of the mystics with 'only time for a passing regret. He had no inclination to consider whether his new preoccupation was likely to give him what his spirit yearned for'.[1] Inevitably, it does not and he is obliged first of all to employ an assistant so that he may concentrate again on reading to satisfy his 'inner signals',[2] and then to sell the poultry and leave for Germany. Similarly, Simeon Grimes in The High Consistory has lost his creative genius as he has become commercially successful and he can only regain it by a series of extreme actions which repudiate his socially acceptable role as respectable and distinguished painter. There, the contrast is made between the unconventional relationship of Grimes and Claire, and that of a married couple, described as 'silver-grilled, medium done dish from parish-reared top-grade stock'.[3] The bovine dullness of the couple prompts Grimes to call them 'Mr and Mrs':

> recalling a television programme of that name I had once watched, in which a couple, looking as if fished up from their stagnant pool of

1 Black List, Section H, p. 149.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 154.
3 The High Consistory, p. 194.

wedlock for the occasion, display feats of intelligence not far off those performed by shepherd dogs at shows. 1

The television show is possible only because of the stagnation of the relationships of couples like 'Mr and Mrs', which betrays them into it.

The only point at which the businessman becomes at all acceptable is where his business is illegal and he is closer to criminality than respectability. That is the case of Ben Goldberg, hero of Julie, who insures goods at a high premium and then raises fires in the warehouses where they are stored to collect from the insurance companies. Although legally a criminal, Goldberg believes he is morally honest; he says 'I don't defraud the poor and squeeze the last ounce out of them. I go for the rich, Julie; for the Insurance companies and for the banks' 2 and even when his is on trial, his comments reported by the newspapers oblige their respectable readers to admire him against their will:

> that night people said: "That fellow Goldberg was good to-day. You must admit he was good." And in their hearts they felt that he was even better than they dared say. And some of them felt something stir within them, uncomfortable and awkward. 3

Although a businessman in one sense, it is the world of business which imprisons Goldberg and by so doing it makes him a criminal, an outcast. Its unwilling acknowledgement of his powers, however, indicates that he has a vitality which is both alien to the business world and greater than it, a threatening vitality which makes normal businessmen feel 'uncomfortable and awkward'. Its source is the closeness with which Stuart allies some criminal states of mind with mystical ones, as he does in the poem 'Criminals'. In this case Goldberg is close to the

1 The High Consistory, p. 195.
2 Julie, p. 116.
3 Julie, p. 163-4.

most vital experiences of life, in spite of his cunning, vulgarity and brashness. The reader's realisation of this follows Julie's realisation that 'He managed to communicate some of that crude, magic vitality into her veins, that passion for life. It was beautiful, that hidden intensity, that undying flame, in so common a human receptacle'.[1] Goldberg's 'undying flame' links him with the mystic and ranges him on the side of spiritual truth not just in spite of his illegal activities but partly because of them, because they are inspired by a reaction against what Stuart calls the 'respectable dead'. In a curious way, then, this suggests a reversal of usual values to a notion that it takes a criminal to be an honest man, where honesty means not just social conformity but the expression of intense spiritual life, even if that expression is statutorily illicit. Activities like Goldberg's have an element of gambling in them too, since each insurance fraud may result in profit or imprisonment and there is no telling which. Indeed, his willingness to hazard his belief in his own skill against the skill of insurance investigation is part of Goldberg's 'hidden intensity' which unites him with the mystic. Because the businessman operates for safe moderate profit and the gambler for uncertain high stakes, the two are diametrically opposed, although complementary in that it is partly the contrast with the sterility of business life which makes gambling attractive and gives it some of its spiritual potency.

The artist, too, is concerned with alienation from social conformity in order to find some greater truth. This is the case with H in his prison cell, where isolation is the condition through which insight will come, as it does for Sugrue in Memorial, when he is spiritually isolated after the death of Herra. Neither Sugrue nor H are criminals in a conventional sense. When Sugrue is arrested at the start

1 Julie, p. 288.

of the novel it is because he is suspected by his neighbours of having had intercourse with a minor; Sugrue's alienation from them is confirmed by his relationship with Herra and, at the end of the novel, with Liz, who tells a telephone caller that he has become involved with 'The Friends of Sex'.[1] In H's case his imprisonment is a mark of his separation from 'the victors' and he regards it as inseparable from his state of mind:

> Endless days emptied of all certainty except the fact that they'd fallen into the retributive hands of the victors. H, and Halka because she was involved with him, had been rounded up as one of the plague-ridden in the countries being cleaned out. He was not interrogated beyond the brief questioning at their arrest and it did not occur to him to question their right to imprison him, nor even Halka. It wasn't hard for him to see his state of mind as singling him out from the healthy norm at a time when divergence and dissent was doubly suspect. That his inner state was obviously not the factual reason for their imprisonment was irrelevant. [2]

Here again there is the sense that society's unquestioning self-righteousness means that integrity can exist only outside it. H's criminality is of a particularily innocent sort, therefore, since it is part of his artistic development, his 'inner state', and is one of the 'vital experiences' he was preparing himself for on the racecourse. His imprisonment is the result of the major gamble that he takes, his move to Germany at the start of the Second World War. As with his horse-racing, he refuses to justify himself in moral terms and insists instead on his need to follow the imaginative insight he is pursuing, whatever it may cost him. His aim is an extension of the notion that in a certain sense the most successful gambler might be the one that loses most. By going to Germany he is likely to lose the support of most of his English readers, and through that loss, he believes he will find

1 Memorial, p. 261.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 418.

aesthetic development. To the reader's immediate response that under those circumstances his move hardly constitutes a gamble, but smacks more of a carefully considered business transaction, Stuart opposes a greater gamble: when H goes to Germany there is every likelihood that Germany might win the war, in which case he would be victorious in material terms, acclaimed by the new elite, and, of course, totally vanquished in any other terms. H is gambling to win aesthetic insight through allying himself with the defeated: at the point at which he makes the bet, his hopes seem to have only an outside chance of coming true, and if defeated, he will be lost absolutely. It is the ultimate gamble, the staking of everything on one throw and is expounded by H in conversation with a British prisoner-of-war:

> "The last thing I can, or want to do, Captain, is justify my being here in moral terms. Whatever the motives for my coming here, and they were complex and far from pure, I've begun to realize that it's here in the company of the guilty that with my peculiar and, if you like, flawed kind of imagination, I belong. The situation I've involved myself in, however disastrous for my reputation, and perhaps because it <u>is</u> disastrous, gives me a chance of becoming the only sort of writer it's in my power to be."
>
> "I'd understand if you told me you'd be at home among the defeated but surely not among these victorious brutes."
>
> H didn't answer. Captain Manville had touched a vital spot. If the setup here really triumphed, as seemed likely enough, H saw quite clearly by now that for himself it would mean inner disaster. To be acclaimed by a pseudo elite in a triumphant Reich as a foreign writer of genius would hardly be a bearable situation. In the case of a German disaster, which even then he didn't rule out, having thrown in his lot with the losing side would certainly turn out to be of immense value in his growth as an imaginative writer. Though being branded as a Nazi by those from whom most of his readers would have to come, scarcely argued well for his future, no matter how his work developed. 1

This passage also contains the idea that true honesty is found only in actions which by normal standards are regarded as criminal, since H's integrity puts him on the side of 'the guilty' and whatever the outcome brands him as 'a Nazi', while material success would be disastrous. The

1 <u>Black List</u>, <u>Section H</u>, p. 331.

reason for H's rejection of moral values becomes clear; they are only an expression of social values, which ultimately are connected to the values of the business world, and are reversible according to the social situation. In a victorious Germany H would be morally vindicated and acclaimed, whereas in a defeated Germany he would be outside the moral pale of the victors. In the event, of course, his gamble pays off in the peculiar terms which H desires and far from any acclaim, he listens in the silence of a prison cell in a further gamble that he will hear the words of redemption for which he hopes.

The contrast between businessman and gambler is summed up pithily in Stuart's short, factual guide to betting on horses, Racing For Pleasure And Profit In Ireland And Elsewhere. In the first two chapters of the work, Stuart writes about, firstly 'How to make money at it' and secondly, 'How to go racing for pleasure' and links the two in his consideration of the attitude most conducive to successful gambling:

> it is when one is betting to win money rather than not to lose money that there is most chance of success. The fear of losing money is a very bad incentive for selecting what horses one is going to back. It makes one often bet on the favourite irrespective of other more important considerations. 1

The difference between betting to win and betting not to lose is the difference between the gambler and the businessman. To bet 'not to lose' is to bet only for gain, to make a profit or, at the very least, not a loss, to stay on an even financial keel; it is a very limiting attitude, forcing conformity and a search for security in the consensus of betting on the favourite. Betting to win, though, means expecting to win, ignoring security and balance in an affirmation of one's own initiative and judgement and without the comfort of knowing, if one

1 Racing For Pleasure And Profit, p. 19.

loses, that the judgement of others was as faulty as one's own. Prudence may be comforting but it is not successful; gambling to win is the only way in which success is likely to be found. This is made clear in Stuart's novels, too. In The Chariot, for instance, Amos needs money and sets out to win it on the Coronation Cup. His calculations are lengthy and fine; each runner is considered on every count until he believes he has found the winner. The horse loses, of course, and his losing streak continues for as long as he relies on scientific calculation. It ends only when he backs a horse chosen by Mrs. Darnell, who has no special knowledge of racing but has a certain affinity with all animals and an almost prophetic ability to pick winners.

Success in the case of The Chariot is in monetary terms initially, but this leads to Amos's realisation of 'the insidious, deathly power of money'.[1] From this follows his appreciation of his life with Lena and Mrs. Darnell and the 'simple peace'[2] of the room they share. Eventually, their life in the lodge in the graveyard frees Amos from money-problems and brings him closer to the passive wisdom of Mrs. Darnell, and he can write again. Success, then, needs to be redefined; the gambler is successful if his gambling demonstrates a knowledge of certain inner truths or if it brings him closer to those truths. Paradoxically, losing may be the most successful thing a gambler does since it may bring him closer to those mystical inner truths than winning would have done. The curve away from conventional notions of gambling and towards mysticism is very obvious here, and loss through gambling, and its consequences, is a repeated theme in all of Stuart's work. In Things To Live For this sort of loss is shown to be liberating, teaching a freedom from possessive materialism which allows the more vital areas of life to be experienced:

1 The Chariot, p. 169.
2 The Chariot, p. 191.

> Apart from the suffering caused by the misfortune or death of those I loved, I know that all suffering has been my own fault and has also been for my own good. It has arisen from that acquisitiveness, that desire to possess, rather than to bow down and pass on.
>
> Whenever I have given myself too entirely to something, I have always suffered through it. Wanting some lesser thing too much, I have been taught to want nothing but the whole, and those lesser things have been snatched from me, have been made to crumble before my eyes, so that I might not stop at them, be absorbed by them but always go on towards the greater fullness of living.
>
> . . . on the racecourse . . . I have been schooled in taking knocks, in disappointment. 1

'The greater fullness of living', like Harry Goldberg's 'undying flame', is not a quality likely to be appreciated by the businessman. Losing, therefore, can be an act of defiance towards the commonsense business world, in the deliberate valuing of material loss and the triumphing in some other, more special way. In Pigeon Irish, for example, the horse backed heavily by Catherine, Athbara, loses by a narrow margin to Twotime backed by Brigid. At the end of the race, though:

> Athbara stood impatiently lifting and dropping his neck, pulling against the grip of the stableboy. He was quite cool. Then Twotime was led into the winner's cubicle. She was black with sweat. On her neck the sweat was fringed with a greyish froth and her whole body steamed. 2

Losing becomes a symbol for inner strength, here. Athbara's backers have won no money but their choice has remained keen and cool; Twotime is successful materially, but completely exhausted. Similarly, Catherine will be pilloried by the press and people but retain an inner calm that will allow her to go on to other things, while Brigid, retaining her material safety, will exhaustedly give up Frank and the new way of life which he espouses. The parallel could not be precise without being obvious and banal but it is close enough to be a

1 Things To Live For, p. 155-6.
2 Pigeon Irish, p. 177-8.

recognizable metaphor of the novel's main action.

Apart from its dramatic tension and its exciting descriptions of racing, it is the metaphorical value of gambling which is most important in Stuart's work. Through this, of course, the gambler is linked to the artist. The relationship between H's gambling and his development as an artist, for example, consists of more than just shared risk-taking. As well, he finds the same total absorption in racing as earlier he had found in his reading of the lives of certain artists and writers, and then, in his reading of the mystics. So, when he finds a volume of Racing-up-to-Date, he associates it with the mystics:

> As soon as he saw it he knew it was what he was looking for, as years earlier he'd been drawn in an out-of-the-way corner of a bookshop to a life of St. Rose of Lima, Juliana's Revelations of Divine Love, and The Ascent of Mount Carmel, by St. John of the Cross.
>
> The book contained a record of the previous season's flat racing, and at home in his room he was soon familiar with the new symbols and hieroglyphics, the secret language, not of mysticism this time, but the abbreviated racing jargon in small and crowded print. 1

What he was looking for, was a part of the 'lifetime of increasing obsessions and intensifying hauntings, as well as the lucky avoidance of false repute, to become a true novelist'[2] and both the obsessional and the haunted qualities of racing are insisted on elsewhere in the novel, especially where racing and artistic development are interlinked. In this passage H's horse has lost:

> This was the first of many such dread moments when, in parks, doorways, at street corners, the city (Dublin or London) was suddenly drawn away to the fringes of consciousness while on some sparse gray print in an almost blank column his whole attention concentrated. The three names, placed one above the other, were registered by other more vulnerable nerves at the same time as by the optic one. And had some passerby asked him, as occasionally occurred, what had won the big

1 Black List, Section H, p. 181.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 180.

race, he would have found it hard to answer intelligibly. H recalled some lines of Yeats's: "What portion in the world can the artist have/Who has awakened from the common dream,/But dissipation and despair?"

Surely, Yeats had never been much immersed in the "common dream." But he was not sure if he understood the poem correctly. The dream, common or uncommon, needed dreaming with exhaustive intensity and in agonizing detail if a writer was to have something worthwhile to report. No important book was ever produced by trying; it came about as the by-product of an all-obsessive and perilous inward journey. 1

Racing takes on a metaphorical value in this passage; H's concentration on the racing results, his removal from his physical surroundings, and the activity of his 'other more vulnerable nerves' is turned into a metaphor of artistic dilemma, through its link with the Yeats quote. The artist must awaken from 'the common dream' - as H does when consciousness of the city recedes from him - but having done so, he discovers only 'dissipation and despair' - the dread felt by H at his losses. Having established this connection, the passage then modifies it and to some extent retreats from the paradox set by Yeats by suggesting that the commonness or the exclusiveness of the dream is irrelevant: what is needed is a wholehearted commitment to it, found only by following it with 'exhaustive intensity' and 'agonizing detail'. Art then becomes a by-product of a more intense experience than that of careful composition; it is the outward manifestation of a completely engrossing, dangerous 'inward journey'. In racing terms, it is the difference between 'betting not to lose' and betting to win, 'trying' against 'perilous inward journey'.

This metaphor also links racing with mysticism, since it is one point of entry into the introspection and release from the everyday world that is part of the mystical experience. It also, therefore, links mysticism with 'deliberate delinquency' and gives us a notion of what, in social and financial terms, commitment to Stuart's idea of

1 Black List, Section H, p. 185.

the mystic life may involve. H's gambling involves him in losses which result in the material suffering not only of himself but also of his wife, who complains 'Look at the rags I have to wear while you fritter the money on horses'.[1] It is as much a bone of contention between them as was H's study of the mystics, and it represents a further step in their estrangement. If H is to follow his dream with the intensity and detail he requires of himself then he must accept this discord and the guilt which goes with it. In very mundane, quite unromantic ways, he must be willing to inflict suffering on others as well as himself in order to absorb himself in his obsession. H follows his quest for inner knowledge with an unremitting integrity that estranges him from Iseult and which manifests itself in his willingness to bet on horses and to lose money he can ill-afford, in order to plumb the depths of loss to their full and thus to develop the inner strengths suggested in Pigeon Irish and Things To Live For. Artistically, these experiences are amongst those which allow him 'to glimpse beyond the present limits of awareness'[2] and thus to extend himself imaginatively.

The contrast between gambler and businessman is made consistently in Stuart's novels. In The White Hare, for example, life in the decaying 'big house' at Rosaril is contrasted with the town-life of Dublin to the disadvantage of the latter. Rosaril represents freedom, and excitement, summed up by an account of a daring steeplechase, and the reckless chances taken by Dominic on horseback and Hylla climbing over the cliffs. Dublin, though, is epitomised by the home of the Walshes, 'almost exactly similar ... to thousands in other terraces, roads and avenues'[3] and by Patrick's dreary job:

1 Black List, Section H, p. 185.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 232.
3 The White Hare, p. 191.

working away at tasks which he did not like, without any ambition in that regard or even any pride in his work beyond making himself stick to it. [1]

Most of all, the contrast is between the white hare of the title, a rare thing found by chance and hunted down by the Princess, a greyhound belonging to the Rosaril family, and the metal hare at a Dublin greyhound racing stadium. There, true gambling is seen as being willing to risk the hare escaping for the joy of the chase, while the city track is governed by the ethics of monetary gain and is just 'a crowd of money-hungry people in a concrete bowl'.[2]

The contrast is made humorously in The High Consistory. Simeon Grimes has just decided 'to invest a considerable part of the proceeds of the sale of my first two pictures on one of the three-year-old colts taking part in this first classic race of the season'[3] when he hears a cautionary internal voice warning him that such action is fraught with the dangers of loss. It is 'the authentic voice of my other ego, a hard-working, cautious fellow, if not carrying an umbrella, with a keen sense of money'.[4] The dominance of this business man alter-ego is a metaphorical expression of Grimes's loss of creativity, which is linked with both gambling and mysticism. Anxious to make money, Grimes concentrates on his vision of Ste. Thérèse of Lisieux and holds an imaginary conversation with her in which he asks her for 'the name of the horse first past the post in the French Derby at Chantilly'.[5] Tantième is the name given to him; he backs it heavily to win, but although it is first past the post it is in a photo-finish and in the absence of a camera the judges' verdict gives the race to the other horse. The attempt to use spiritual insight for material purposes,

1 The White Hare, p. 245.
2 The White Hare, p. 239.
3 The High Consistory, p. 72.
4 The High Consistory, p. 72.
5 The High Consistory, p. 109.

represented both a refusal to commit himself to a true risk and a defrauding of spiritual values, and Grimes can only restore both his monetary loss and spiritual one by agreeing to the misappropriation of money from a wealthy racehorse owner and thus, like H, entering the greater degradation of the guilty. The reason that this action can bring spiritual regeneration is that it overthrows the conventions of property ownership that the business world rests on in favour of Grimes's obsessional inner vision and thus supports the gambling impulse against the business one. No justification such as this is made, of course, but Stuart makes his point clear with a reference to Dostoyevsky's obsession with gambling, which also recalls the uncompromising actions of H:

> Had not Dostoievsky come crawling home one early morning from the casino at Wiesbaden to his young wife to beg from her the last couple of crowns she'd been saving for rent and babyfood for their infant daughter? 1

Gambling, then, is an expression of the obsessional pursuit for self-knowledge and inner vision, a pursuit which has as its goal the mystical experience necessary to the production of true art. The gambler is linked to the artist and mystic, and through them to the criminal as well, an alliance which is inevitable since gamblers are also outside the moral pale and because criminals of the sort that Stuart is concerned with are involved in risk. This, of course, applies only to gambling in which everything is risked and in which losing may be equally as attractive as winning. Against this is set the business world, the world of careful calculation and a desire not to lose, in which the only risks taken are minor, easily affordable ones. The businessman cannot make the final affirmation of commitment, cannot give

1 The High Consistory, p. 116.

'the yea to life' and must, therefore, belong with the 'respectable dead'. The gambler may find redemption by running his risks - indeed, this is the only path to redemption - but the businessman can never find it.

The estrangement of the gambler from the businessman, which represents the difference between inspiration and sterility, comes through risk-taking, and the artist is linked with this, to a large degree. There are, however, other means by which the artist may be isolated from society. In A Hole in the Head Shane's perceptions are altered by the wound in his skull and the drugs he takes. In Memorial, Herra is isolated from the other children in her school, all 'so well-adjusted looking'[1] by her acute sensitivity to suffering. These states of mind are not insane in the sense of being destructive, violent, or gibberish. Rather, they are an alternative form of perception, a derangement which provides different ways of looking at the world. In The High Consistory, for example, Grimes meets a young girl in an asylum and wonders:

> Was she, perhaps, one of those who in Rimbaud's famous phrase had 'arrivé à l'inconnu par le dérèglement des sens'? According to him we are deranged when we love and when we suffer, as well as when we lose our minds: 'Toutes les formes de l'amour, des souffrances, de folie'. [2]

It is this sort of 'deranging' that Grimes tries to bring to his painting, in which the truth about his subject is found only by distorting it:

> I paint what I see, and then I only see what I paint. A point comes when, if all goes well, I no longer look at the sitter, still life or whatever is there, but, concentrating on the canvas, distort what I've done to give it a chance to reflect some of the truth about the subject

1 Memorial, p. 262.
2 The High Consistory, p. 45.

I'd missed by direct observation.[1]

Here, there is an intimate relationship between artist and subject which allows him to redefine it in personal terms and thus to reveal some important truth about it. This intimacy between artist and work is vital. In The Angel of Pity, for example, the narrator says 'No artist can interpret life in the tragic sense except he himself has suffered deeply'.[2] In Black List, Section H, H uses a metaphor of the grain in wood to describe what he believes to be the organic relationship of a writer and his work:

> In these pieces of furniture he noticed patterns formed by the grain in the heart of the wood. And, as though a new preoccupation had been seeking some means to enter his mind, there flashed into it with the urgency of a revelation: "Like that must be the process that records a writer's inner growth in the spiral-like pattern of his work." [3]

Clearly, this is an elaboration of H's statement to Yeats that the artist should be 'doubly involved' with his subject, and it indicates that at some point it is necessary to examine the relationship between Stuart's fiction and his biography.

This intimacy might seem to be developed into exclusivity, so that the relationship between a writer and his work separates them both from society. In The High Consistory, for example, Grimes suggests that the work of any great creative artist must be anti-social and contrasts that with the blandness of popular art:

> I'm delighted that art has become another means of creating an acceptable image of civilised man, along with the other ways of disguising his rapacious jungle origins, such as hygiene, sun-bathing, haute couture, public lectures. A community intent on such trivialities

1 The High Consistory, p. 39.
2 The Angel of Pity, p. 115.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 169.

allows any Blake or Mantegna who happens to be around to pursue, unnoticed, his own dark and mostly anti-social purposes. [1]

It is clear from the links made between art and gambling in the novel that it is the areas of society controlled by businessmen, by the 'smug and successful', that the artist opposes. For the businessman to be able to speculate and accumulate he requires a stable, predictable society; the artist's job, however, is to find alternative points of view, as Grimes distorts reality, and to investigate other sets of values. They are fundamentally opposed, therefore, and in this sense the artist is anti-social.

There is a further danger, however, of regarding the artist as being concerned with these alternative ideas only from a personal point of view, and thus ignoring injustice or cruelty in society. This is a possible, but mistaken, interpretation of Halka and Dominic's intimate relationship at the end of The Pillar of Cloud, 'they together in their room, shut into it together alone and without immediate threats of change of any kind'[2], or of Grimes's description of the High Consistory as 'obscure poets and myth-makers, unheard of outside a small circle of friends'.[3] In fact, of course, the redemptive state occupied by Halka and Dominic means that they have a sense of suffering and joy which is universal; it is this which has enabled Halka to forgive her torturer, Radek, and which causes her to qualify her joy with reference to 'the others'.[4] Similarly, the purpose of the High Consistory is 'the revelation of an alternative reality'[5] which is not limited to those who reveal it. Stuart makes this point more generally and at greater length in his review of Edgell Rickword's Literature in Society:

1 The High Consistory, p. 98.
2 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 231.
3 The High Consistory, p. 320.
4 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 231.
5 The High Consistory, p. 320.

There is an area of the mind that cannot attach itself to any organisation with predetermined aims and dogmas, whether religious, party-political or ideological. This is a division of consciousness, or subconscious - recognised by Jung and other psychiatrists . . . in which works of art are composed and from where, in those who are not artists, the deep responses to them come.

This does not mean that an imaginative writer's work cannot be religious or that he is indifferent to social and other injustices. Indeed, the contrary is true. It does, however, suggest that criticism from dedicated members of a church or ideological party, Communist or otherwise, accusing him of self-isolation and indifference to the spiritual or class struggle, is useless and irrelevant. . . Where I believe Mr. Rickword and other left-wing critics are wrong is believing (to be fair, not all of them do) that certain imaginative writers are indifferent to such injustices. (If they were they would hardly be 'imaginative'). In fact, we are obsessed by the cruelties inflicted on the defenceless, human and animal, all around us, with the connivance of authority. We believe what we can do best and most effectively is to create alternative ways of life and relationships to the prevailing 'double-talk' and 'double-think', making our 'worlds elsewhere' that illuminate the corruption of so many of those who legislate for this one. 1

A number of important points are made here. The artist is necessarily isolated from any consensus, because, literally, that part of the mind which gives rise to creative writing or which appreciates it, cannot attach itself to 'predetermined dogmas'. This is contrasted with 'self-isolation'; deliberate insulation from suffering and struggles, which is not part of the artist's isolation and which Stuart repudiates categorically here as he does by implication elsewhere in his work. Far from ignoring suffering the creative writer is obsessed by it in all its manifestations and the purpose of his work is to create an alternative reality which will expose it. However, injustice takes place 'with the connivance of authority', a second reason, why the artist cannot subscribe to successful organisations, why he is estranged from society, and why his purposes are 'mostly anti-social'.

There is another danger, here, as Frank Kermode points out in a radio discussion with Stuart, that 'estrangement could go so far that a

1 Francis Stuart, 'Imagination and Injustice', Hibernia, 7 December 1978, p. 26.

writer had no audience'.[1] The discussion is an interesting one. Stuart suggests that:

> The sort of writer we're speaking about is a very non-literary writer and he always feels, in fact, that he has quite a large audience of disenfranchised or ghetto people like himself. It's quite true that they are not often readers, and it's very hard for him to communicate to them. But he doesn't doubt they're there, and that's what keeps him going. [2]

The artist, then, is an outsider speaking to outsiders in the 'special sense' in which Stuart defines alienation. This recalls H's concern with Lane and his father, with mysticism, gambling and other 'extreme isolating factors unnamed and unknown'[3] which allows those who experience them 'to glimpse beyond the present limits of awareness'.[4] Specifically, these 'disenfranchised' are the central characters of most of Stuarts novels: Halka in _The Pillar of Cloud_, for example, who has been committed to an asylum and given electro-shock treatment against her will, in which 'you're publicly executed and it's like a kind of public rape and you wake up in your own excrement';[5] or Alyse in _The Flowering Cross_, who is blind and subject to a life of drudgery and

1 See Frank Kermode, David Craig, Francis Stuart, Adrian Mitchell and Tony Garnett, 'Political Metaphors No. 4: A Critique of Commitment', _Listener_, 91 (1974), 144-146. In Francis Stuart, 'Letters to J. H. Natterstad', _Journal of Irish Literature_, 5, no. 1 (January 1976), p. 97-110 (p. 108), a letter from Stuart dated 14 March 1973 says 'I wonder what you thought of Frank Kermode and his lecture? If I had known, I might have suggested you ask him why his talk with me was never broadcast by the BBC. I heard, though not very reliably, that there were things in it they objected to!'. In a private communication Professor Kermode said that the programme, which consisted of rather heavily edited conversation, had been broadcast and that _The Listener_ carried a shortened version of it. A private communication from the BBC confirmed that the programme was broadcast nationwide on Radio 3 on 6 January 1974 and that Stuart did make a contribution to it. No recording of the programme was kept by the BBC.

2 'Political Metaphors', p. 145.

3 _Black List, Section H_, p. 232.

4 _Black List, Section H_, p. 232.

5 _The Pillar of Cloud_, p. 39.

'holy bullying'[1] at the convent where she is charitably maintained as a servant; and Lena in The Chariot, who, after losing her job as a receptionist, turns by slow degrees to prostitution to provide money to look after her mother. Their experiences are 'the little, ludicrous tragedies of the world'[2] and the task of the artist is to reach a state where he is part of that suffering and can communicate the insights to be found through it. Kermode suggests that Stuart is concerned solely with a private experience and that his idea of the artist's isolation is only a sort of political negativeness. He says:

> Any sociological explanations of the poète maudit, of the estranged artist, of art as a means to private epiphany, would invite political interpretations; the commitment to inaction is a sort of negative political commitment. 3

Two points must be made here. First, in Stuart's work, the 'epiphany' is not private in the sense that it is the privilege of one person. Redemptive insight is available to those who seek it. It is a sense of this that makes the complacent newspaper-readers uncomfortable when they read of Goldberg's trial in Julie. The small communities set up in other novels emphasise the shared nature of the redemptive experience; in Redemption, for example, both Nancy and Aunt Nuala are asked to share in it, but only the Aunt accepts, since Nancy operates according to different values. From the point of view of the writer, his work must involve the reader in it as he is involved in it; the novel must have a 'personal relation to its readers' who must be 'involved and not just a passive listener or spectator.'[4] Given, too, that redemption is found through an intimate relationship with others and part of that experience

1 The Flowering Cross, p. 38.
2 The Coloured Dome, p. 287.
3 'Political Metaphors', p. 145.
4 Francis Stuart, 'The Irish Novelist - 4', Irish Times, 1 December 1972, p. 12.

is the sense of participating in a universal harmony, the insights sought by the artist cannot be considered to be private. The 'smug and successful' and 'the respectable dead' exclude themselves, therefore, rather than being excluded by the artist. Secondly, Stuart's work is not concerned with 'inaction' but with action of a certain kind. The hero of Things To Live For fights for the Republicans because fighting is another way of 'opening one's arms to life', another embracing of different experience. Dominic leaves his comfortable home for the privations of war-time Germany so that he may experience 'the great fears' and 'the great lusts',[1] in The Pillar of Cloud. In both cases the political situation is regarded as simply a set of circumstances which allows certain physical and mental conditions to be explored. Far from suggesting a callousness towards those who suffer, or a lack of regard for values such as justice or truth, Stuart is concerned with understanding the suffering which exists in these circumstances, and the universal truths, outside political codes, which are revealed by them. For the artist to be able to do this, he must be free of organisations with 'pre-determined aims and dogma'. So, Stuart says 'any consensus . . . is a threat to the imaginative writer, even if its a very liberal consensus; any attitude or ideologies that, at a given moment, take over a large section of society are bound to stifle one'.[2] The creative artist must have freedom, therefore, to explore any attitude or situation, but this does not necessarily mean that he has no responsibility to a moral code. In Stuart's case, his work is formed by the idea of redemption; the experiences his characters undergo are often deliberate attempts to find this state and this is especially so with the creative artist. Not only political situations but all circumstances are material for this exploration; In Black List, Section

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 15.
2 'Political Metaphors', p. 145.

H, H discusses one of his novels with Dr Linser, who has expressed reservations about a part of it:

"The first part of the novel is quite clear to me. It's where the girls are exchanged in the night between the hero and the member of the armed forces of the occupying power that I have some difficulty in following where the theme is leading, or your purpose."

"I don't know that I had a purpose beyond exploring certain situations to see if my hero could adapt himself to them without a sense of shame. That's the only way I know for a writer to find out for himself how far he can go in imaginative freedom without damage to his psyche. The saying of one of the Karamazovs that all is allowable is only true if there's no God." 1

'Imaginative freedom' is the condition of both artistic integrity and the redemptive experience. Elsewhere, H comments that, for his characters, 'it is only in isolation, and under pressure from outside, that imagination, their truly redeeming element, reaches its peak'.[2] This isolation and pressure is the artist's equivalent of the gambler's betting. For both, it separates them from large sectors of society, from the businessman and his protégés, while at the same time leading them towards a more vital unity, the redemptive experience, through which artist and gambler may join other outcasts, the mystic, the criminals, and the disenfranchised of the ghetto.

* * * * * * *

These themes show that the relationship between spiritual states and the ordinary world is a complex one. Mundane experience is viewed in a quite different way. This spiritual development and its attendant revaluing of the mundane, is characteristic of the state of redemption, and it is necessary, therefore, to examine their interrelationship more closely. Since redemption is a state which is achieved, it seems to have a separate existence from the relationship between spiritual and

1 Black List, Section H, p. 286.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 281.

mundane qualities which leads to it. However, since those qualities are the means through which it is reached, there is clearly a high degree of interdependence. Further, it must be emphasised that the achievement of redemptive understanding is not an automatic consequence of certain experiences. In The Pillar of Cloud, for example, Dominic's experience is contrasted with that of Petrov, who also believed that some new, more vital life would come out of the desolation of war. Unlike Dominic's partly-instinctive, unformulated feelings, however, Petrov is clear about what he expects:

> Once he had believed that all those who had suffered and died were martyrs from whose wounds and blood the seed of a new wisdom and love would be nourished. And this faith had touched him inwardly with life . . . He had kept clippings from papers that seemed to prove that men were really touched, as he was touched, by a new sense of the kingdom of heaven being at hand . . . He wanted a woman who had suffered, who had been tempered and made patient, and together they would read the poems of these young French writers and walk in the hills and watch the sunsets and the night heavens and even go to the cinema. Because when you had that faith in you it did not matter much what you did. All had a new significance. 1

Petrov limits his possibilities for spiritual insight by his simplistic, categorical beliefs. Suffering is separated from insight, since it is the 'martyrs' who suffer and others, such as Petrov, who nourish the 'new wisdom', and there is, therefore, a certain denial of personal experience - he seeks objective proof in newspaper clippings of the 'new sense of the kingdom of heaven', rather than making an inward search for personal proof. When compared with the real experiences of Halka and Lisette, Petrov's romantic idea of 'a woman who had suffered', and the nature of their relationship, is pathetically absurd. Inevitably, he becomes disillusioned by what he sees as Lisette's betrayal of him, and his inability to conceive of spiritual life outside the terms he has set

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 170-2.

for himself:

> But now when he was face to face with another vision of the world, in which all was betrayed for a few good meals and a pair of silk stockings, where not only a sparrow but a few million men could perish, many of them in torment, without there being the slightest sign of any paternal spirit in the whole empty cosmos, every evidence of the misery in which he lived was horrible to him. [1]

Instead, he gives himself up to simple material pleasures, to a world which is 'glowing, plausible, full of sensuousness'.[2] Because Dominic is unsure of what to expect he is open to insights from any source and can, therefore, go through the learning process which culminates in his redemptive insight,[3] in a way in which Petrov cannot. Although Petrov has, in one sense, sought redemption through the same sources as Dominic, in another sense, he has failed entirely in his perception of what those sources are. By setting limits to them he has destroyed them, as the businessman destroys the spiritual potential of gambling by only betting, or speculating, on certainties. Instead, it is necessary to be open to all possibilities, including that of failure in the search for insight, as H is at the end of Black List, Section H where he is prepared not only for revelation but also for despair.

It is not just a question of any sort of combination of spiritual and worldly qualities leading to redemptive insight, therefore. Spiritual awareness cannot be raised by a certain complacent consciousness of suffering, but only by participation in it, imaginatively or actually. Only then is it possible to revalue the mundane, to understand its relationship with spiritual qualities, and

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 173.
2 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 174.
3 Compare this idea with Friedrich Nietzsche, Sämtliche Werke, 12 vols, (Stuttgart, 1964), VIII, 291-409, Ecce Homo, p. 305: 'ich muß unvorbereitet sein, um meiner Herr zu sein'. [Rendered in Friedrich Nietzsche, Ecce Homo, translated by R. J. Hollingdale (London, 1979), p. 43 as: 'I have to be unprepared if I am to be master of myself'.

thus find redemption. Redemption, then, comes about as a consequence of exposure to spiritual and mundane qualities, while the depth of their interrelatedness is only realised after the redemptive state has been found. So, in Black List, Section H, 'small happenings that long ago would not have registered now echoed clearly and magically in this pure atmosphere'[1], and in The Pillar of Cloud, 'life was being given to them . . . it was something which they could never touch or examine but they were conscious of it . . . it was in all that they did, under all that they did'[2]. Redemption here is a new state to be explored, offering possibilities beyond previous experiences of the spiritual and the mundane.

In part, then, redemption is like the third point of stasis from which physical and spiritual qualities and good and evil can be understood, suggested by Stuart in his article on Boehme in To-morrow, the 'mover which is unmoved' which he equates with Boehme's idea of 'the hiddennesss' and with the 'negatively charged nucleus in Atomic Theory'[3]. His elaboration of this idea illuminates the difference between Petrov and Dominic in The Pillar of Cloud. In 'In The Hour Before Dawn' Stuart says 'this vitality that is known as beauty springs from the workings of positive and negative forces . . . beauty in a world whose basis is "Contrariety" must at certain definite times appear to us to be darkened, must turn, as it were, its other face to the sun.'[4] Petrov is unable to appreciate a spiritual state which is absolute, which, therefore, contains both positive and negative forces, and which may appear 'darkened' while remaining unchanged. Dominic, however, is aware that many 'have suffered without guilt' and that through this 'they have achieved an innocence that goes far deeper than

1 Black List, Section H, p. 415.
2 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 231.
3 'A Note on Jacob Boehme'.
4 'In The Hour Before Dawn'.

the old one'.[1] The quality of redemption, therefore, is absolute and primary. It is accessible through spiritual and mundane experience but it is not a product of them. Rather, it generates them, as complementary states expressive of its own qualities, through which man may communicate with it. The idea is the mystical one of a Godhead which is immanent and available through certain modes of perception; this broadly-defined mystical idea is described by Evelyn Underhill:

> But if we may trust the reports of the mystics - and they are reports given with a strange accent of certainty and good faith - they have succeeded where all these others have failed, in establishing immediate communication between the spirit of man, entangled as they declare amongst material things, and that "only Reality," that immaterial and final Being, which some philosophers call the Absolute and most theologians call God. [2]

Stuart's references to Boehme and to Julian of Norwich, as well as his own short work, Mystics and Mysticism, shows his interest in mystical states of mind. Equally, however, these suggest a particular commitment to an essentially Christian viewpoint, supported by his use of images such as the cross and the fish, and it is necessary, therefore, to ask what relationship exists between Stuart's notion of redemption and orthodox Catholicism.

One problem in understanding this is that although Stuart makes frequent references to Christ, he never links this with the Christian God in any conventional way. When Christ is referred to it is as another criminal or outsider, whose suffering and redemption was on an intensely personal level rather than for universal salvation at the behest of God. Thus, in Christ's passion it is his suffering that is focused on, not his glory, and his resurrection is seen in terms of

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 194.
2 Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism: a Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness, revised edition (London, 1930), p. 4.

personal intimacies and contacts, such as the scene from St. John where the resurrected Christ grills fish at Lake Tiberias for his disciples. Even in The Angel of Pity the focus is on the angel rather than on the Being or Force which sent her and ultimately she becomes identified both with Christ and with the soldier she has come to aid as well as with the angel in Gethsemane. This question of Stuart's conception of Christ has been discussed more authoritatively and expertly by Fr. Paul Lennon.[1] He recognises that Stuart's novels are not religious ones in an conventional or narrowly defined sense but argues that:

> Defining religion, not as institution nor as dogmatic ideology, but as the transcendence of the human spirit at the "breaking points of life" (Max Weber), the search for "ultimate concern" (Paul Tillich), the "Mysterium fascinans et tremendum" (Rudolph Otto), we may argue that Stuart has admirably and uniquely translated his convictions into a moving imaginative creation which corresponds to many of the criteria acknowledged by the psychology and phenomenology of religion. [2]

Acknowledging, therefore, that 'to judge from his writings Stuart is uncomfortable in his Christianity'[3] Fr Lennon goes on to discuss the vision of Christ which he believes is produced by Stuart's convictions and which appears in his imaginative creations:

> Again and again, however, he returns to the figure of Christ as to the sole symbol and inspiration for a better humanity. While revolutions and reforms founder on the rocks of man's ineradicable temptation to power, the Christ-event possesses a mysterious efficacy to remain uncorrupted despite the betrayals and distortions of professional Christians. Christ reveals himself to those whom fate has stripped of smugness and preconceptions . . . Christ as saviour is redemptive through suffering and desperation and only those who have suffered can recognize him. Mention of resurrection is rare and then only to be

1 Fr Paul Lennon, 'Religious Values in the Novels of Francis Stuart', Milltown Studies, 2 (1978), 11-23.
2 Lennon, p. 20.
3 Lennon, p. 20.

denied, at least as a triumphant event.[1]

As Fr. Lennon observes, it is the redemptive quality of Christ with which Stuart is concerned rather than his resurrection. As has been suggested earlier this lack of concern with resurrection is generated by the idea that redemption comprehends resurrection, or, Christ's resurrection is an expression of the power of redemption, as is the valuing of otherwise mundane domestic details. This interpretation is supported by the emphasis placed by Stuart on the appearance of Christ at the Sea of Tiberias, an incident which unites Christ's resurrection, care for small, homely tasks and the sense of communality and sharing.

In that incident, then, there is the combination of great spiritual force with the mundane setting through which redemption is offered. This combination is part of every expression of redemption and it sheds some light onto Stuart's avoidance of an orthodox expression of God, an avoidance which is made explicit in The High Consistory:

> Any deity would, I suppose, have to share every intense experience, happy or painful, of each of his creatures to rank as a personal God. Even dispensing with the timing problem as inapplicable, this would mean an unremitting state of turmoil, countless agonies and ecstasies, if somewhat less of the latter, imposed pell-mell on each other. Any nerve-system, however divine, that could not only withstand, but register and evaluate, such a flood is to me unimaginable and thus unreal. 2

1 Lennon, p. 20-21. It must be recognized, though, that in taking the figure of Christ to exemplify his notion of redemption as a combination of spiritual and worldly, Stuart is following a basic assertion of the Christian Church. F.C. Happold, Mysticism (London, 1963), p. 114, for instance, says:

> what the Christian Church asserted was a complete coinherence . . . of matter and spirit. Only by such an assertion could the experience of the earthly Jesus and the experience of the indwelling Christ be intellectually fused, only thus could the full immanence of God in the world . . . be adequately explained.

2 The High Consistory, p. 28-9.

In place of the conventional idea of a personal God, Stuart puts the force of redemption manifest as the combination of the spiritual and mundane, in an intimate communion as at the end of Pigeon Irish:

> the archangels stooped and swayed with the faint movement of deep-sea plants touched lightly by enormous currents . . . They spoke to Conquistador and he heard again the sweet intimate notes of his own Pigeon Irish that he had thought lost for ever. 1

Here, redemption is a combination of the 'enormous currents' touching the archangels and their communality with Conquistador through his own language, so that Conquistador absorbs and is absorbed into the 'enormous currents' through the 'archangels' while still retaining his individuality. In Redemption, it is manifest still more ineffably, through the small community waiting for an answer that cannot be spoken but which is communicated by some quality in Father Mellowes's smile:

> Ezra and the two women waited for an answer. Even Margareta was waiting, knowing from the tone of Ezra's voice that he had asked a question. Ezra looked up. He saw Father Mellowes' smile, the smile that he would never get quite used to, resting on them, and he knew that that was the nearest to an answer that they would ever come. 2

The importance of mysticism to Stuart's work has been emphasised constantly and here it seems that, as Paul Lennon says, 'Stuart is closer to Eckhart than to Aquinas'.[3] The comparison is illuminating. The mysticism of Meister Eckhart is 'deeply Christo-centric'[4] and is concerned with the need 'to find and know one's soul . . . to penetrate to the abyss of the self and there discover the divine nature of the

1 Pigeon Irish, p. 288.
2 Redemption, p. 249. Compare this with the end of the end of 'The Grand Inquisitor' section of Dostoyevsky's The Brothers Karamazov where the Prisoner's only response to the accusations of the Grand Inquisitor is a kiss.
3 Lennon, p. 21.
4 Happold, p. 269.

soul'.[1] Silence and solitude are required for this penetration as they are required by H, Grimes, Dominic Malone and those others of Stuart's heroes who experience redemption through isolation. Eckhart says:

> To achieve the interior act one must assemble all one's powers as it were into one corner of one's soul, where, secreted from images and forms, one is able to work. In this silence, this quiet, the Word is heard. There is no better method of approaching this Word than in silence, in quiet: we hear it and know it aright in unknowing. [2]

In Eckhart, 'the interior act' is the discovery of the nature of the soul. This is a two-fold action since on the one hand the soul realizes 'its being in self-knowledge and is freed alike from the sense of I-ness and from the world'[3] and on the other hand 'there is also the idea of the soul's knowing and finding itself through union with the Godhead'.[4] The dual path of knowledge of the soul is paralleled by Eckhart's division between God and the Godhead:

> The Godhead is the abiding potentiality, containing in Itself all distinctions as yet undeveloped. The Godhead cannot therefore be the object of worship or knowledge. It is Darkness and formlessness. God, the Blessed Trinity, is 'evolved from' or 'flows out from' - it is difficult to find a precise phrase - the Godhead. The three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of the Trinity are . . . inherent in the Godhead Itself. [5]

Exact parallels with Stuart's work are not sought but certain similarities are unmistakeable. Freedom of the soul from the world is similar to Stuart's idea of finding the real value of mundane things rather than the values normally attached to them; just as freedom from the world is concurrent with union of the soul with the Godhead so

1 Happold, p. 270.
2 Happold, p. 77.
3 Happold, p. 44.
4 Happold, p. 44.
5 Happold, p. 270.

revaluing the mundane is concurrent with spiritual insight. Secondly, the combination of spiritual and mundane in Stuart's work is the expressible form through which redemption, an ineffable state, is reached and from which it emanates, the distinction between Eckhart's knowable God and unknowable Godhead; spiritual and mundane are inherent in redemption as well as providing access to it.

In broad terms, therefore, Stuart's notion of redemption may be compared with some Christian mystical thought, especially that of Eckhart.[1] However, it is the differences between Stuart's notions and those of other writers that are of most interest. It is true that, as Underhill says:

> The mystics find the basis of their method not in logic but in life: in the existence of a discoverable "real," a spark of true being, within the seeking subject, which can, in that ineffable experience which they call the "act of union," fuse itself with and thus apprehend the reality of the sought Object. [2]

Here, there are clear parallels for Stuart's notions of 'opening one's arms to life'[3] and 'the practical relation of mysticism to our own everyday lives'.[4] Stuart's ideas about the ways in which spiritual and mundane can be interrelated to lead to a redemptive experience are highly individual, however, as the themes of gambler, artist, businessman and ordinary man have shown. They are elaborated further by

1 Comparison may also be made with other systems of thought which take cosmic unity as their basic principle. Taoism and Buddhism provide traditional examples of this. See also James Joyce, The Critical Writings p. 141-8 for Joyce's discussion of aesthetics in which he argues that 'there is no sensible object which cannot be said to be in a measure beautiful' (p.147); and R.M. Pirsig, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance (London, 1974) in which he argues that divisions such as form and meaning, science and art, are artificial since everything is generated by a cosmic unity which he calls 'Quality'.

2 Underhill, p. 24.

3 Things To Live For, p. 11-12.

4 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 24.

other related themes which link the mystic with the criminal and which suggest the interdependency of what might seem to be the contrary qualities of sacred and sensual love.

* * * * * * *

An essential characteristic of Stuart's idea of the mystic is that he is divided from any consensus. He does not completely reject society, however, since in Mystics and Mysticism for example, he is concerned with the application of some mystical attitudes to everyday life. Rather, it is a seclusion from society's values which arises as a result of an inward journey which reveals a different set of attitudes and a reassessment of the relationship between spiritual and mundane qualities. The experience of redemption takes place in society and this world, therefore, and is defined in part by its differences from the consensus. The mystical experience is described by Stuart in Mystics and Mysticism as proceeding through a series of stages. First comes an 'active purification', a process of simple preparation for the mystical life which includes 'self-denial and . . . abstaining from what is actually sinful'[1]; in contrast with this activity, it is then necessry to seek an 'inner passivity'[2] so that insight may enter the soul from God; then follows a period of intense suffering, 'trials of all kinds . . . always very terrible'[3] called the Dark Night of the Soul; from this arises 'the unitive life', in which 'the soul is fully united to God'[4] and man is redeemed since 'Jesus came on earth to redeem us and to give us an abundance of spiritual life, which life consists in nothing else than union with Him'[5]. This is an orthodox expression of those

1 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 6.
2 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 15.
3 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 7.
4 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 7.
5 Mystics and Mysticism, p. 14. The terms employed by Stuart are the usual ones used to describe the 'mystic way'; see, for example, Underhill and Happold.

ideas, appropriate to the series in which it was published. Elsewhere in Stuart's work, they are translated into rather different terms, more appropriate to his idea that mystical insights can be gained by the gambler and the artist. This does not mean that they are diluted but rather that their essential characteristics are reinforced. In The Chariot, for example, where Amos is trying to recoup his betting losses, he parodies the process of the mystics to try to predict the winner of a race, believing that 'if he gave himself up to it in a kind of brooding stillness he felt that he must win. With love and care it must be possible to win money as it was to win everything else'.[1] At the same time, he realises that 'in his heart he knew that money was not made or won by love but by something quite different',[2] and, of course, he loses. His 'brooding stillness' is simply an imitation of the 'inner passivity' necessary to real insight, of which he is aware, and which he describes elsewhere in intimate, personal terms:

> Whoever his Lord was Amos knew that he was not a Lord only to be turned to at moments of fear. He was a Lord of stillness, of the stillness in which the trees stood and were shrouded over there in the park, and He was best approached by a spirit at peace, shrouded in this stillness too. Or perhaps the approach came from Him and He sent his stillness before him to prepare the way like a kind of sleep. 3

One stage of the mystic's progress is to seek insight actively; another, though, is to realise that it is found by being passive, by opening the self to the influence of the Godhead, and it is Amos's realisation of this which indicates that the 'stillness' is a mystical one. Necessarily, the process of gaining mystical enlightenment is an arduous one, in contrast to the facility with which other, superficial

1 The Chariot, p.165
2 The Chariot, p. 165. Later in the novel he makes a fiasco of a job as a chef which he approaches in a similar spirit.
3 The Chariot, p. 98.

experience can be assimilated. So, Amos realises that:

> He could come to have a superficial knowledge of a subject in a few hours' concentration. While with the things he thought he really knew about, such as art and horse-racing, his insight had come very slowly and even now, after the best part of a life-time, he had much to learn.1

The risks and losses incurred by the gambler and the slow process of the artist perfecting his art parallel the search for insight of the mystic. A poem entitled 'At the Races', published in 1932, gives some indication of the ecstasy and insight available in this way; the second stanza reads:

> There falls upon this air of June
> The hollow clap of hooves over the grass.
> The riders' colours brighten through the light.
> Only in love the mind finds such wild peace,
> Stirred but by beauty's flight; there falls a hush,
> The heart half stops, as under a full moon
> We see but the faint stillness of midnight
> In light's continual rush. 2

The experience of the racecourse gives way to one of love, expressed through the oxymoron 'wild peace' which suggests a uniting of certain universal qualities, and the language of mysticism.[3] There is, too, the peculiar exchange of the functions of the senses which 'see' that which can usually only be felt, 'the faint stillness of midnight', which often marks visionary experience.[4] These might be read as poetic devices

1 The Chariot, p. 97. see also The High Consistory, p. 73. 'They were concerned with style and technique which, at seventy-six, Titian thought he had finally mastered, and the work of his last fourteen years shows that he had'.

2 Francis Stuart, 'At the Races', Motley; The Dublin Gate Theatre Magazine, 1, no. 1 (March 1932), 15.

3 For example, Underhill p. 433, who talks of 'a Reality . . . at once static and dynamic, transcendent and immanent, eternal and temporal'.

4 For example, Underhill p. 7: 'I heard flowers that sounded, and saw notes that shone'.

only, however, and their importance lies in the change of perception which has come about, from the experience of the racecourse to some more vital, universal apprehension of 'light's continual rush'. This is not the complete, slow process of development which Stuart charts in his novels but a part of it, which links the gambler with the mystic and shows the potential for the love which, at first, appears to be only a mundane love, to be linked with spirituality and some more vital experience.

Where this change of perception is linked to criminality, then an association is made by Stuart between criminal and mystic. The potential for this is clear in his early writing. The main point of 'Criminals', for example, was that the murderer was inspired by some peculiar intense vision, which gave a different purpose to his murder and associated ritual. He is still liable for execution but even that is apprehended in different terms, not as a punishment but as a part of the peculiarly ecstatic experiences which lead to the final joining of the man and woman in death. The purpose of the murder is more important here than the crime itself: it is the only way available to the criminals of finding the strange union they require and their criminality, therefore, becomes reversed into a kind of special integrity, which ceases to be crime in a conventional sense because it is self-contained and thus liberated from the moral codes of ordinary society. Punishment becomes a deliberate use of society's mores to pursue an individual vision and thus develops into a challenge to the consensus rather than an acceptance of its authority. In this pursuit of a personal ideal at whatever cost to the self, and in the challenge it offers to society, the criminal becomes allied to the mystic.

1 Compare this with the treatment of the execution of Gary Gilmore in Norman Mailer, The Executioner's Song (London, 1979) in which Gilmore's refusal to have his death sentence commuted is presented as a personal challenge to State authority.

The idea of the outsider is another important link between the mystic and the criminal, for if the criminal has been expelled by society than the mystic has expelled society from himself. Both are isolated in pursuit of their own aims and their own visions and consequently both are often at variance with accepted values and notions of behaviour. This reiterates the most vital part of Stuart's notion of the criminal: he must have some intense personal aim to replace generally accepted aims and he must be willing to pursue that to the end. So, the greatest mystic may also be the greatest criminal; in Black List, Section H, for example, Stuart is concerned with the idea of Christ as a criminal, 'exposed to the vindictive glee of some of the crowd'.[1] Criminality is being used in a special sense here. It is not simple law-breaking for profit - in Stuart's terms, that would approximate more closely to a business venture. Nor is it violence designed to stun society in some calculated way, such as the punitive executions carried out by the governments in The Coloured Dome and Glory: they, too, are calculated in effect. Rather, it stems from some other imperative, which is criminal because, necessarily, it challenges the assumptions of society. In Pigeon Irish, for example, Frank Arrigho attempts to surrender Ireland to the enemy on terms that certain small communities be allowed to remain to preserve the spirit of Ireland until such a time as civilisation may be restored. He is imprisoned as a traitor, denounced as a rebel and a coward, and finds that on release everyone except Catherine has turned against him. He is literally an outcast; his criminality, though, has stemmed from his mystical, personal vision of preserving certain spiritual forces, which has obliged him to break society's laws. The link between mystic and criminal is emphasised here by references to a letter of St. Catherine

1 Black List, Section H p. 179. See also p. 173, 'His calling isolates the artist, as does his crime the criminal'.

of Sienna in which she describes accompanying a young nobleman to his execution, as Catherine accompanies Frank after he has been rejected by his wife and comrades: [1]

'. . . and he said to me: "Stay with me and do not abandon me, so shall I fare not otherwise than well, and I shall die content"; and he leaned his head upon my breast. Then I exulted, and seemed to hear his blood, and mine too, which I desire to shed, and as the desire increased in my soul and I felt his fear, I said: "Take heart, sweet brother, for soon shall we come to the nuptials; thou wilt fare thither bathed in the sweet blood of the Son of God . . . and I shall be waiting for thee at the place of execution." . . . his heart lost all fear and his face was transformed from sadness to joy, and he rejoiced, exulted, and said: "Whence comes such grace to me that the sweetness of my soul should await me at the holy place of execution?"' 2

The physical punishment of both Arrigho and the nobleman brings spiritual reward. The nobleman finds exultation and grace; Arrigho's spiritual fulfilment, however, is expressed by reference to the pigeon Conquistador, who had died physically as Frank has died from his old life:

Above the parti-coloured world, black and white with day and night, blending with blurred edges, sodden with its latest war, the archangels stooped and swayed with the faint movement of deep-sea plants touched lightly by enormous currents. They stooped over the pigeon held shining in their hands. They spoke to Conquistador and he heard again the sweet intimate notes of his own Pigeon Irish that he had thought lost for ever. 3

In the unity with higher spiritual forces which is part of the new life he has chosen, Frank may be assumed to find entry into a new spiritual life which brings with it a reassertion of the most loved and valued

1 Catherine is compared by the denunciatory press with Rasputin, emphasising her criminality as well as her mystical nature: 'The similarity between this young girl's sinister temperament and that of the Russian priest Rasputin at the time of the revolution' Pigeon Irish, p. 284.
2 Pigeon Irish, p. 78.
3 Pigeon Irish, p. 288.

parts of the old earthly life - 'his own Pigeon Irish'. It is a notion of redemption which reconciles the role of the criminal with the mystic life, and which suggests that society's sanctions against certain sorts of criminals may provide them with the experiences sought by the mystics through their 'Dark Night of the Soul'.[1]

In The Coloured Dome, Stuart expands on this idea. Delea has given himself up to the authorities in the knowledge that he will be executed as a criminal, and Stuart connects his self-immolation with the mystic's progress towards higher knowledge:

> Within himself this inner winter, this dark night of the soul, might be a kind of purification to fit him for sharing the suffering of the world . . . He saw that it is only through the cross that love can be fulfilled. So God has arranged it, he thought, connecting love to suffering and suffering to union with Himself . . . It is only after man is dead to himself, Garry Delea thought, that the new, resurrected life becomes possible. It is only after that long winter, that dark night of the soul, on which he knew that he was entering . . . He saw man, completely dead to himself, resurrected to a miraculous and invulnerable joy from which all trace of suffering had disappeared. 2

The process described here, love, suffering, the dark night, and unity with God, follows the stages of mystical experience described in Mystics and Mysticism. Delea's criminality is of a particularily innocent kind, since it exists only in the eyes of his executioners, and this emphasises the need to consider the nature of the difference between society and the sort of criminal who is allied to the mystic. Things To Live For offers certain insights into this. The book is concerned with a total commitment to living life to the full in a certain way, as its opening makes clear:

1 Parallels for this idea may be found in Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment, where Raskolnikov finds a new life in the relationship with Sonia and with spiritual values which his term in prison brings, and in Tolstoy's Resurrection where Nekhlyudov gains profound insights from his accompanying Katusha on her banishment.
2 The Coloured Dome, p. 265-8.

There is an emptiness within the human breast, a hunger for we hardly know what, that is the deepest and wildest of all desires. It is the falling in love with life, the dark deep flow below the surface. Subtle, crude, beautiful, terrible. A few have dared to open their arms to it, to plunge into it, and always they are wounded and humiliated, but they have been touched, have been caressed by those fiery fingers that curved the universe and there remains about them a breadth, a spaciousness, a warmth of genius. 1

The similarity to Delea's meditations is quite clear: the 'emptiness' and 'dark deep flow' is like the dark night of the soul; wounding and humiliation parallels suffering and death of the self; the 'fiery fingers' represent a union with God; and 'a breadth, a spaciousness, a warmth of genius' is the equivalent of the 'miraculous and invulnerable joy' anticipated by Delea. Love of life is a mystical, life-giving love and is ultimately a union with God, then. It follows that those who embrace life closest, in whatever way and whoever they are, are closest to God and that those who refuse that sort of experience are the furthest away from God and the furthest away from life. Hence Stuart carries on to say:

To love, that is all that matters. To lavish love even on objects unworthy of it is infinitely better than living a cold, ordered life in a study . . . It is only through opening one's arms to life that one will find the ultimate peace and security. Only through suffering and loving . . . Protecting oneself against life is not peace but death. Of all the strange varied people I have met it has not been the sinners, the degraded, the drunkards, the gamblers, the crooks, the harlots who have made me shudder, but the dead, the respectable dead; cut off like a branch from the tree. 2

This very complete statement incorporates all of Stuart's preoccupations with the outcast, with suffering and love - including the sexual love of 'harlots' - with criminals, with ordinary 'unworthy' things, and with taking the daring leap into an experience that will produce the

1 Things To Live For, p. 9.
2 Things To Live For, p. 11-12

redemptive state. That state of 'ultimate peace and security' is contrasted to the immediate security gained by 'protecting oneself against life', which produces only death, and the mystic, like the criminal, is ranged against 'the respectable dead'. Particularly interesting here is the idea of taking a deliberate step, of 'opening one's arms to life' in order to find 'the ultimate peace'. This is clearly an equivalent of the 'active purification' of the mystic, but equally clearly it is a broader interpretation of 'abstaining from what is actually sinful'. That which is sinful is redefined here as a 'cold, ordered life' or 'protecting oneself against life', since they are the activities which prevent mystical insight, which 'cut off' 'the respectable dead' from the redemptive experience which is spiritually revivifying. The criminal at least retains potential for that experience and thus for a deeper insight than other men. Criminality alone is not sufficient, however; as well, it is necessary 'to lavish love' and to suffer. In The Angel of Pity, the combination of love and suffering is expressed as compassion, the quality which the narrator of the novel realises is the most necessary of all, and through which comfort and insight comes:

> That suffering of remorse that I had been through had transformed me . . . I had seen within myself unfathomable depths of weakness and evil, and I had seen around me, encompassing me, an infinite tenderness and forgiveness. That two-fold vision had made me compassionate. I had learnt that compassion is not a mental reaction finding its best expression in words, but something emotional and fierce and inarticulate; in fact, a passion, and the most passionate of all passions. [1]

The word 'passion' becomes equivocal here; it may be understood as both intense feelings of ordinary man - 'a passion' - and the Passion of Christ - 'the most passionate of all passions' - through which man is

1 The Angel of Pity, p. 234-5

linked to Christ. This complex interrelationship of spiritual insight, compassion, and criminality, is explored more fully in Stuart's post-war novels.

The Pillar of Cloud challenges conventional notions of guilt and innocence. Halka is censured for her past life by Frau Arnheim, yet, as Dominic suggests, Halka is innocent in a more real sense, since she has 'suffered without guilt'. Real evil lies in the abstract powers of society, the 'executioners' who administered the electro-shock treatment to Halka, and the system which allowed Radek to have such absolute control over his torture-victims. Halka's innocence is linked vitally with her compassion. Although she recognises Radek as her torturer she refuses to testify against him since she forgives him for her actions. Dominic points out to her her social duty 'to others whom, if he is not convicted and executed, might become his victims in some future war or revolution';[1] however, since her forgiveness is absolute, she refuses testimony, and Dominic realises that she represents 'the unfathomable innocence that was on the earth to set over against the monstrous evil'.[2] Not only does she challenge conventional notions of her own legal status in society but also the bases of a society that can allocate guilt and innocence so easily and absolutely. In place of retributive justice, she puts a compassionate forgiveness which more effectively neutralises evil. As Dominic suggests, 'that is the double marvel. The marvel that such pure evil exists in the human heart, and the second marvel, which is actually a greater one, that there is such an unfathomable innocence in others'.[3] This innocence of Halka's, and her compassion, evolves in part from her suffering in the asylum and the prison camp and is, therefore, a part of her status, in society's eyes,

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 222.
2 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 223.
3 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 218.

as a criminal.

The ability to forgive crimes which are socially abhorrent is explored further in Redemption. One of the remarkable things about the novel is the way in which Kavanagh is made acceptable without removing the horror of his brutal, jealous murder of Annie. This arises in part from the opportunities for self-realisation which he gives others. Her marriage to Kavanagh fulfils Romilly's desire for 'someone to come and say to me: "Save me and help me and be to me wife and mother and sister against all the world and the devils"'.[1] Partly through his association with Kavanagh, Father Mellowes gains a greater insight into the desolation of those imprisoned, 'the blasphemies that had been scribbled on the dirty walls of the cells and the words cried, mumbled and whispered in the asylum'[2] and thus understands the compassion that must be set against it. Ezra, too, gains insight into his own suffering through that of Kavanagh, and realises their basic brotherhood, in spite of his initial repulsion for him:

> stronger than this repulsion was another feeling; he no longer regarded Kavanagh as a stranger, as a completely separate being from himself. He saw in Kavanagh his own image, a little altered or distorted perhaps, but there was no final wall between his blood and Kavanagh's blood, his flesh and Kavanagh's flesh. 3

This sense of brotherhood is recognised more immediately and instinctively by Margareta who, on being told that Kavanagh has committed a serious crime and is wanted by the police, comments 'Poor fellow . . . is there no end to the police?'.[4] Implied here is a rejection of the impersonal righteousness of the law in favour of compassion and sympathy for someone who is being hunted. It is this

1 Redemption, p. 214.
2 Redemption, p. 169.
3 Redemption, p. 176.
4 Redemption, p. 175.

spirit of compassion, too, that leads to the creation of the small community in which first Kavanagh, then Aunt Nuala, lives. Kavanagh's crime and execution, therefore, touches each person in spite of their initial repulsion for him; he becomes a catalyst, revealing certain qualities about themselves which are essential for the redemptive insight of those who find in his crime some potential of their own. In a sense, then, he also becomes a sort of sacrifice, a redeemer of others. This is emphasised by the equivocal symbol of the fish. Kavanagh is a fishmonger, and in the novel, the fish is a symbol of life[1] as well as carrying the apparent symbolism of Christ, as used by the early Christian Church; when Kavanagh is arrested he is in his shop, which is full of gutted fish, suggestively emblematic in one way of the crucified Christ. In another way, though, it suggests the girl he has knifed, while he is also a fishmonger in the sense in which the word is used by Shakespeare, that is, he is a bawd, dissolute and sexually obsessed. Through Kavanagh, other characters avoid 'indifference and complacency' which 'are the beginning of Hell'[2] and finally find a mutual caring and understanding in their community. Criminality here is seen as a force for change, a breaking down of barriers, which, if apprehended in a certain way, can lead to compassion and through that to the experience of redemption.

The use of a murderer as a central figure in Redemption raises more forcibly the question of what Stuart means by the term 'criminal'. Clearly, it is necessary for the criminal to provide, or find, some sort of redemptive insight for his actions to be linked with those of the mystics. It is this which exculpates Kavanagh and the murderer in 'Criminals'; Goldberg, in Julie, is justified by both the release he brings to Julie and his overriding sense of battling against an

1 Redemption, p. 28: 'For me that fish was a symbol of life'.
2 Redemption, p. 222.

impersonal, merciless financial organisation. By contrast, the petty thief in the short story 'The Bandit' gains and gives no insight and is entirely despicable. As well, though, the way in which criminality is attained is important. Crime for gain is little different from the actions of the businessman and that sort of criminal is an expected, perhaps substantial, part of the social system which provides police and prisons to control him. Criminality associates itself with mysticism, though, when it arises as the result of other circumstances. It may be imposed, as the criminality of Halka was imposed on her by need[1], or it may be the by-product of other urgent needs. In The Flowering Cross, for example, Alyse steals the collection boxes from the convent because it is her only hope of freeing herself from her oppressive life there. Criminality is rarely sought except insofar as it might offer either a certain sort of isolation from the rest of society or a specially close relationship with another person. In Memorial, for instance, Sugrue's and Herra's relationship is necessarily illegal because Herra is a minor, and it is distasteful to the general public because of the disparity in their ages. Having once joined the ranks of the criminal and outcast, though, it is impossible to return to those of the 'smug and successful'. Instead, affiliations must be made with the other outcasts, mystics, gamblers and artists who have some potential, even if it is never realised, for deeper insight. This does not mean that every anti-social element is automatically endowed with the possibility of a higher spiritual life; in A Hole in the Head, for example, the two kidnappers are brutal representatives of 'the everlasting hypocrisies of every public figure and all authority everywhere'.[2] Rather, it means that separation from the consensus can occur because of differences in a

1 Lena in The Chariot also turns to prostitution out of want.
2 A Hole in the Head, p. 198.

sense of values, which might be regarded by society as 'illegal' or 'criminal'. Where this happens, and where those values encompass compassionate understanding, integrity, and an impulse towards spiritual fulfilment, then criminal and mystic may join in the search for redemption.

This definition is important. Otherwise, there is the danger of destroying moral responsibility rather than exploring it, and of suggesting that violence to others is a condition of enlightenment. This is especially dangerous where the criminal is linked to the artist, since it can lead to simple stereotypes, such as the Romantic idea of the poète maudit, or to a certain negativeness about the nature of creativity. Some aspects of Surrealism, for instance, support total destruction:

> 'On a fait des lois, des morales, des esthétiques pour vous donner le respect des choses fragiles. Ce qui est fragile est à casser.' 'Nos héros sont Violette Nozière la parricide, le criminal anonyme de droit commun, le sacrilège conscient et raffiné'. 1

Such nihilism is not possible in Stuart's idea of criminality. His characters are rarely involved in social or moral issues in this way; their impulse is to extend personal understanding rather than to alter society in any political way, or to form small communities to share this understanding. As well, they are concerned with a compassion which is absent from this sort of destruction, and which makes it alien to them.[2]

1 M. Nadeau, Histoire du Surréalisme (Paris, 1964), p. 22:'Laws, moralities, aesthetics have been created to make you respect fragile things. What is fragile should be broken.' 'Our heroes are the parricide Violette Noziere, the anonymous criminal of common law, the conscious and refined perpetrator of sacrilege.'

2 See also Saul Bellow, Herzog (London, 1965), p. 171: 'The inspired condition . . . is thought to be attainable only in the negative . . . with the aid of narcotics, or in "philosophical", "gratuitous" crime and similar paths of horror. (It never seems to occur to such 'criminals' that to behave with decency to another human being might also be "gratuitous".)'

Finally, the idea of redemption depends on the acknowledgement of some force which is greater than the self alone, and on a self-actualisation by union with it, rather than seeking self-actualisation through isolation alone.

These links between artist, criminal and mystic are clear in Black List, Section H. H sees in Christ the disrepute and alienation from society which is more usually associated with the criminal:

> From the first an air of disrepute and coming disaster had clung to him. The socially integrated sensed it, and avoided him. Those who were normal and sound, firmly established, happily married, honored, justified, appeared to wound him by their very presence. 1

To H, Christ's purpose was to change man's conception of himself, and it was for this 'crime', the disturbance of the moral status-quo, that he was executed:

> The psychology of the hours on the cross he recognised as belonging to the deepest experience . . . He had tried to shatter the treasured image that men had of themselves, of their moral judgement particularly. 2

This purpose is also that of the artist, and thus he too is connected with isolation and criminality, as well as 'the deepest experience', which he must procreate and defend:

> Christ had held the most forward position of His time for several hours. And it would fall to the condemned, the sick-unto-death and perhaps a handful of unregarded artists to defend these areas of consciousness in the coming days as best they could. 3

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1 Black List, Section H, p. 133.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 139-40.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 140.

The relationship between mystic and criminal is clear: activities which might be regarded as illicit can become spiritually fulfilling under certain circumstances. This ethic is also present, to a large extent, in the theme of sacred and profane love, which appeared first in 'Introduction to a Spiritual Poem' and which provides the main debate in Stuart's first novel, Woman and God. The novel concerns the relationship between Colin, who works as a brancardier at Lourdes and whose wife, Anne, is in Ireland; Laura, who is staying in Lourdes with her husband, Frank; and Elizabeth, who is seeking a cure in Lourdes, where she is accompanied by her father, Dr. Bailey, who views her as an interesting case. To all of the characters love, religion, or both, are the primary forces which affect them, and the debate concerns the relationship between sacred and sensual love, and its product. The argument is introduced in a conversation between Colin and Laura. Laura says:

> 'The thing that love is so floods our little beings that we want to take all the life that is coming to us and throw it before our lover. And that's not enough. Nothing is enough. O God! It's torture. It's sweet! It's terrible! You may be a Catholic. You may be married. That's nothing. Nothing is anything in the face of being in love. Only, what happens is that certain things kill the capacity to love. Religion and business and domesticity.'
> 'I don't know', Colin said, 'Religion doesn't kill the capacity. It deepens it; only it disciplines it too." 1

Initially, Laura believes in the total importance of physical love, which excludes spiritual love, since religion kills 'the capacity to love'. In spite of Colin's argument that religion enhances the capacity for physical love, he does not really see the two as being united. Rather, they provide him with different means of trying to escape from his interior loneliness:

1 Women and God, p. 21.

> Always lonely and unable to escape from the isolation of loneliness. Trying to escape through religion; trying to escape through women. 1

He has left his wife temporarily, cannot give himself to Laura, cannot find satisfaction in the devotional atmosphere of Lourdes. His return to Anne, with its promise of comfortable domesticity and simple harmony is undercut by images of the farm as rotting - 'the thatch was rotting and the rain running off it had stained the walls with yellow'. In spite of their mutual assurances of better times to come, Colin sees their relationship in terms of a renunciation of everything else, a self-immuring in each other, and he tries to use the Church as an agent for resolving conflict by removing choice:

> It is only through the Church that we'll be happy,' he said. He thought that the Church gave men strength to renounce all the conflicting choices that were there . 3

The disciplining and deepening force of the Church about which he spoke to Laura has become an excluding and limiting force here, a denial of possibilities rather than a reconciliation of opposing forces. One possibility of coping with the conflicts between sacred and profane love, recognised by Colin and Laura would be through an acceptance of marriage as the approved sanctification of intercourse. Laura, however, comments that in the face of an overwhelming love, marriage is nothing, and Anne comments of another minor character:

> 'Life is a tragic blending of the physical and spiritual . . . she expects to find a happy solution to the tragedy of God and sex. She didn't find it in marriage.' 4

1 Women and God, p. 23.
2 Woman and God, p. 191.
3 Woman and God, p. 191-2.
4 Woman and God, p. 151.

Instead, Stuart suggests that some more profound experience is needed to unite spiritual and sexual love. Central to this is the experience of Elizabeth, in which woman is linked with God by a miracle, a spiritual intervention in the material world. She combines the two sorts of love since she has 'the appearance of a nun'[1] but says that before being converted to Catholicism she was 'simply and completely pagan'.[2] Further, her reason for conversion was to save herself from what she regarded as her failure as a woman:

> 'I knew I was pretty bad . . . I mean a pretty bad failure as a woman . . . I didn't want to go on being one, but I saw there was no way out but by becoming a Catholic . . . it doesn't sound very spiritual. But that is how it was; one goes to God the only way one can.' 3

Really, Elizabeth always stays closer to spiritual love than to sexual love, and although she unites the two to some degree, in her overnight stay with Frank, the unity is only temporary and is negated by her refusal to leave with him at the end of the novel. Stuart makes this explicit in his image of her as a tree:

> A part of her remained deep down; like a root thrust down into the dark clay. She was like a tree, like an evergreen oak, with roots deep down. And it was because she drew another life from what she called religion that she was such a lovely thing. She owed, not only her present physical life, but that dark charm to it too. It made love difficult. 4

Her physical life is dependent on, is 'owed' to her spiritual life and is partly impaired by it. Nevertheless, through her, the other characters are allowed to develop their potential and to re-orient themselves, and Elizabeth herself continues her progress towards a

1 Women and God, p. 43.
2 Women and God, p. 116.
3 Women and God, p. 116.
4 Women and God, p. 134.

spiritual life, made possible by her cure. That is confirmed by a telegraph from the Father-General, to whom she has confided the problem of Frank's love for her:

> Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament remains unchanging amid the decay and reblossoming of human love.
>
> Grow, little flower, in the shade of this Evergreen. Do not plan for the future. He will teach you from day to day. It is too difficult for you alone. May He bless you both. 1

The separation between the two forms of love is insisted on here; the one is temporary, although constantly being renewed, while the other is permanent and unchangeable. The image of the green tree is continued: in the relationship with Frank, that strength and spirituality was a burden which Elizabeth had to carry, but in her sacred union with Christ it is a burden He will carry while she, the 'little flower', is allowed to grow. The first image of her suggests the impossible task of her remaining an unchanging factor in a continual round of change. The second offers her peace, rest, a chance for her to grow herself, and permanence. This is what Elizabeth understands by the message:

> 'that it was only by a continuous closeness to God that she, or anyone, could keep a still, unchanging depth of human love. This was the love she might lavish on Frank' 2

Since her sexual relationship with Frank is hopeless before it starts, the only way in which she can love him is by loving God. The relationship with God in which she must cut herself off from Frank is, paradoxically, the only way in which she can develop a love which she can give Frank, 'a generous love, that would always inspire him, enwrapping him in a flame, a solitary love, like an icy flame that would

1 Women and God, p. 224.
2 Women and God, p. 224.

never scorch the body. The body that, like a sword, must separate them'.[1] As a nun, she can love him with 'an unchanging love that would not blossom into flesh and would not wither'.[2]

Through this paradox, Stuart keeps sacred and sexual love separated, though vitally dependent on each other. Other characters in the novel are obliged to recognise a similar sort of interdependence. Laura, for example, realises that there is a power higher than human love which controls and modifies it, and which is, in part, the reason for Colin refusing to stay with her:

> I saw there was a discipline, a God, one couldn't escape from. That human love wasn't the highest power on earth; that was it. I saw that human love wasn't omnipotent. There was something more powerful than that: the thing that cured Elizabeth, the thing that took you away from me. [3]

Her experience of their indivisibility is figured by the meditation on the peaks of the Pyrenees, a part of the physical world and a sexual symbol, in which she finds purity and inner peace:

> She didn't move. She breathed softly. She was thinking how fine it would be to be walking in the Pyrenees. Against a black sky, white peaks, paling out the lower stars with whiteness. [4]

For Colin, however, insight comes through suffering and a profound sense of desolation. He has an overwhelming sense of guilt at what he sees as his betrayal of the sick at Lourdes, of Laura, and of Anne. This betrayal is hinted at earlier in the novel, when he is at Elizabeth's

1 Women and God, p. 224-5.
2 Women and God, p. 225.
3 Women and God, p. 249.
4 Women and God, p. 251. This is a traditional symbol of spiritual refreshment. See, for example, Psalm 121.1: 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help'; or Charles Dickens, David Copperfield, where Copperfield finds solace and comfort during his sojourn in Switzerland.

bed and heard 'the noise of motor-horns, like a distant crowing of cocks'[1] and is made more explicit by the final image of the crown of thorns on Christ's head:

> And in the coming out the drops were brown-red, for the blood was thick; and in the spreading abroad they were light-red; and when they came to the brows, then they vanished . . . The plenteousness is like the drops of water that fall off the eaves after a great shower of rain. [2]

The sexual passion which Laura sought with him, and for which he might have left Anne, has become Christ's Passion, one of suffering and loss. The image expands, though, to cover Colin's sense of self-betrayal, the slow oozing of the blood being like his dilatory wandering between Lourdes, Laura, and Anne, and the gradual disappearance of all his beliefs and values. He ends with a cry of self-accusation; 'It's my fault. Everything is my fault', which links him with an experience of universal suffering and ultimately, it must be assumed, with the redemptive vision and peace he has sought.

The relationship between sacred and profane love is finally resolved in Women and God through an understanding of the way in which they counterpoint each other. The end result is an achievement of inner tranquility in different ways: Elizabeth and Colin both find insight through suffering, Elizabeth through the suffering born of renunciation and Colin through that of acceptance. Both of them are isolated from physical companionship, however, in order that they might develop their spiritual insight. In Pigeon Irish, though, a similar opposition of physical and spiritual love is reconciled in a rather different way. There, the two qualities are represented by Brigid and Catherine:

1 Women and God, p. 97.
2 Women and God, p. 250.

I saw in a flash the difference between Catherine and Brigid . . . I saw Catherine, her girl's mind, even her body, full of a spirit that had almost faded from the world. A spirit in which all the loveliness and romance of life was linked up with God. With union with God in this life . . . Human love and passion could not satisfy that insatiable spirit. It wanted love, but an everlasting love, passion, romance. Brigid had not that mystical temperament. She did not feel less deeply. It was her mind and body that wanted love. Not that other sense or soul so much. Love meant for her a man. 1

This difference is emphasised by the contrast made between the pigeons which mirror them, Daphnis and Buttercup:

[Buttercup] felt she was going beyond the limits of cotes, of trees, of nesting. Her mating instinct, strong as Daphnis', was not concerned only, not principally, with such a momentary union. Not satisfied with the unmingling contact of flesh, but with wild longing for the undisentanglable blending of blood in death. A mystical union, very physical, very spiritual. 2

The love which Frank and Catherine find is 'an everlasting love, passion, romance' and 'a mystical union, very physical, very spiritual'; the two types of love are combined rather than separated in the final expression of their relationship. Brigid rejects first Frank's ideas, then the man himself; he leaves to join Catherine in what may be isolation or may be the founding of a small community which will preserve the real values of Ireland when the rest of the country is engulfed by the new civilisation. Essential to these real values is the sense of contrast on which the relationship between Frank and Catherine depends; the real Ireland is a place 'of vivid contrasts that blended into a poignant intangible atmosphere' as the spiritual and sexual relationship between Frank and Catherine is a vivid contrast. That the relationship will be sexual is made clear by the idea that they will be the roots of a new community; that its sexuality will be of an unusual

1 Pigeon Irish, p. 211.
2 Pigeon Irish, p. 99.
3 Pigeon Irish, p. 143.

type is emphasised by Frank's rejection of a newspaper story which describes Catherine as his mistress. Here, the redemptive insight which is to be found in the new communal life depends on both physical and spiritual love for its attainment and maintenance.

That profane and sacred love can lead to spiritual insight is made clear by Things To Live For and The Angel of Pity. Things To Live For concentrates on 'the falling in love with life, the dark deep flow below the surface'[1]; sensual love is considered in ecstatic terms and through this ecstasy is connected with spiritual love. There is, therefore, a constant flow between the two, both being referred to in similar terms and one suggesting the other. Ste. Thérèse of Lisieux, for example, 'opened her arms, lived life at its fullest, risked all, suffered all for that love that burnt her up'[2] and the narrator comments 'if she had not been a nun what a lover she would have made!'.[3] He elaborates:

> The libertine and the puritan are common enough species. Both are sterile and miss even that which they look for. For to love passionately it is necessary to be capable of purity and to be pure it is necessary to be able to love passionately. The greatest lovers in the world have had in them some quality of sanctity, and the greatest saints have had some quality of the passionate lover. 4

Things To Live For emphasises the way in which sexual love can provide an approach to spiritual love. The Angel of Pity reverses this emphasis, however, since its main concern is with an angel who has taken on the form of a girl in order to bring salvation to two soldiers. Redemption in Things To Live For lay in experiencing 'the dark deep flow below the surface' and thus participating in life fully, as the puritan and libertine fail to do. In The Angel of Pity, however, this passion

1 Things To Live For, p. 9.
2 Things To Live For, p. 80.
3 Things To Live For, p. 81.
4 Things To LIve For, p. 125.

is replaced by a Passion of suffering which forges the link between the two types of love. The girl-angel, named Sonia, is raped and murdered while the two soldiers whom she came to save are forced to watch. The events suggest those of Christ's crucifixion, with Sonia's exhortations to the two soldiers to stay awake and keep her company before the ordeal, which she speaks of as a cup she must drink, the narrator's denial to her violators that she was an angel after the rape has taken place, and her ultimate resurrection and ascension.

Sexuality in this context is destructive in one sense, although in another, that destruction is a necessary part of resurrection. It emphasises the connection between physicality and spirituality, as does the novel's final description of love:

> That love is both amazingly tender and amazingly terrible in its outpouring. And man is caught in those two arms, between, as it were, a fiery arm that sears and burns him and a white, frail bruised arm that caresses him with profound pity and gentleness. It is only thus, by this alternate wounding and caressing, that he is kept from slipping from their clasp. [1]

Of the two arms, one is spiritual, angelic, and the other is flesh; compassion is the quality which unites them. It is compassion which Sonia feels for the soldiers and compassion which one of them gives to a prostitute which enables her to rediscover life. The understanding of that need for compassion is the source of redemption for the narrator-soldier, while his companion finds it in death, dying to defend Sonia, in the knowledge that he will find 'everlasting comfort'. It is, therefore, an emotion which is powerful on both planes, human compassion mirroring divine compassion and linking the two types of selfless love. In both novels, this uniting of mundane and spiritual love is important.

1 The Angel of Pity, p. 284.
2 The Angel of Pity, p. 166.

In Things To Live For it is the mystical, spiritual quality found in physical love which gives it its potency, and in The Angel of Pity, divine love is made accessible by its entry into the mundane world.

Clearly, physical love operates here on an unusual basis. Sexuality is valued for the deeper involvement of spiritual feeling which it mirrors and to which it may provide access; spiritual love is manifested by physical compassion and loving. Either one without the other is sterile. This issue is debated in Redemption by Ezra and Father Mellowes. Father Mellowes believes, conventionally, that sexuality is essentially evil and that it can only be linked with spiritual good through the orthodox means of marriage. To him, sexuality is 'the old White Worm', 'the ravening Worm that eats down kingdoms':[1]

> Such is the power of the Worm, Ezra, and the other power is the power and the blood of our Lord. And in the end there are these two powers and no others, these two over against each other and only once and in one way are they brought together. One way is given us, Ezra, wherewith to submit the white Worm to the blood of Christ so that its power is sweetened and its blindness given light, the one way and sacrament of marriage and the nuptial Mass. 2

Ezra argues against him that such ritual, designed to neutralise rather than harmonise, is sterile and irrelevant. Instead, he believes that the only valid union is that which produces a new life, both in body and spirit, between two people:

> if a man and a woman can manage to be together and become a new flesh and a new spirit, stronger and more peaceful and more patient than they were apart, that is the one true marriage, the true marriage rhythm, the singing and the dancing and the bleeding all in one, and it can neither be started nor stopped by any priest before any altar. 3

1 Redemption, p. 71.
2 Redemption, p. 72.
3 Redemption, p. 72-3.

This 'new spirit' is the one felt by Ezra when he re-meets Margareta. The important thing about their relationship is the sense of companionship, of new life, that they find in each other. It would be a mistake to assume, as Roger Garfitt does, that this relationship is possible only because their opportunity for sexual contact is limited, that 'sexuality belongs to the old way of feeling, and tenderness to the new'.[1] Ezra's joy on meeting Margareta passes over her diminished sexuality precisely because he is overwhelmed by simple physical contact with her which is potent enough to provide spiritual satisfaction. He says 'Nothing do I need but your dirty little paw like this. That's consummation and salvation'.[2] Love of one sort does not replace love of the other but enhances and modifies it, here.[3]

This mutuality of sensual and spiritual love is illustrated in Stuart's work by his use of the Magdalen figure. In Redemption, Ezra describes the relationship between Christ and Mary Magdalene thus:

> There was no moral disgust of the flesh, but simply an impatience with it, with the old fleshy communion. Because He had something else up His sleeve. That was probably what fascinated a woman like Mary Magdalene; his outrageous, not-yet-revealed passion and the stored-up abandon. It was not hers, but it touched hers in the blood. 4

Passion and abandon, are the meeting-points of spirituality and sexuality here, with spiritual love being a refinement, an advance on sexual love. Morality in the conventional sense does not enter into the question, since the emotions with which both Christ and Magdalene are concerned are 'outrageous', that is outside the consensus that creates such morality. Compassion and passion are joined, too, passion

1 'Constants in Contemporary Irish Fiction', p. 215.
2 Redemption, p. 172.
3 Similarly, it is necessary for Romilly to lose her virginity to be freed from an imprisoning purity, before she can find the compassion which she extends to Kavanagh.
4 Redemption, p. 163.

because it is specifically mentioned, compassion because that was the basis of the relationship between Christ and Mary Magdalene. This is especially evident in Black List, Section H, where, in a discussion with Iseult about the Church's attitude to sex, H invokes the anointing of Jesus by Magdalene:

> They were soon discussing the Church's attitude to sex which Iseult defended by arguing that Christ had shown the same wariness towards it.
>
> "What would the average priest have made of the girl who 'didn't cease from kissing,' dropping her tears on, and wrapping her long soft hair around, His feet?" H asked.
>
> Iseult screwed up her eyes and averted her face . . . against him and his ideas. 1

H is trying to suggest that the point of contact which Magdalene could make with Christ was closer to sexual love than some disembodied spirituality, and that because sacred and profane love are not mutually exclusive, this was a contact which Christ could appreciate and to which he could respond with his own, different love. This is made possible by their sensitivity on the one hand and their alienation from common values - such as those of 'the average priest' - on the other, which allows this unusual vision. The union which exists between the ecstasy of the mystic and that of the lover is understood by H on an imaginative level at first. In one of his novels, he describes his hero, X, thus:

> For X, existence had always only been separated from a state of nearly insupportable sensation by the fragile but tightly knit fabric of the material world. Wherever this wore thin he felt in danger of being exposed to one of the varying degrees of horror that it normally veiled. But there were areas behind the physical curtain where the exposure was to rapture, and the way to the commonest of these was between the couple of loose, stretchable stitches that had been left in that part of the fabric that constituted the body of a woman. 2

1 Black List, Section H, p. 257.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 220.

The flesh is a route to the spirit, here; intercourse is an exposure to a rapture which is 'behind the physical curtain'. It is not just that they are interrelated, or co-exist harmoniously: sexual and spiritual love are each other, are the same experience, a release from the ordinary world to a different and better state. Finally, this imaginative realisation gradually becomes reality for H when he meets Halka Witebsk, with whom intercourse is 'spiritual-sensual, sacred-obscene, complete as never before.'[1]

Redemption here is seen as a removal beyond the ordinary physical world attainable not by one or the other of sexual or spiritual love but by joining together of both in harmony. This idea is extended in Memorial, where the relationship between Christ and Magdalene is re-expressed in terms that are more intimate and more closely connected with the mundane world while obviously being estranged from it:

> Mary M. didn't take to social welfare work, far less join the others in promoting the newly-formed Church after the disappearance (that they were already calling the Ascension) of her beloved. She simply, according to you, started singing instead of stripping in the downtown joint (she was nearly out of her teens by then) and a little later there crept into her popular songs a new note. [2]

Here, the importance of the physical expression of love is indicated by the new personal privacy which Mary M expresses in stopping stripping; it is no longer a means of contact to be taken lightly. Similarly, the intimacy of their spiritual relationship is expressed in her separation from 'the others' and her refusal to use orthodox terms such as 'the Ascension' or to participate in conventional expressions of organised

1 Black List, Section H, p. 416. H experiences the ecstasies separately on earlier occasions: when released from prison women assume such an importance for him that he believes he is 'sex-mad' (p.119); later, when reading the mystics, he finds in Revelations of Divine Love 'a felicity that just then seemed more compelling than the sexual one' (p. 135).

2 Memorial, p. 197.

piety like 'social welfare work'. Instead, she maintains her purely personal relationship with Christ, expressed here as 'a new note' in her singing.

* * * * * * *

The interdependency of these themes used by Stuart is especially apparent in The High Consistory. Simeon Grimes can only rediscover the inspiration necessary for his painting by leaving the consensus through an act of moral criminality. His sexual sterility is an index of his spiritual sterility, and it is only when he has allied himself with Claire, 'beyond the moral pale', that both inspirations are restored to him. The relationship between outsider, artist and sacred and sexual love is emphasised by the brief affair Grimes has with a young girl on her way to become a Carmellite nun. The affair is necessary for the girl, Miranda since, like Romilly in Redemption, she needs to be released from a sterile purity before she can find a real purity based, like Evoe Lavalliere, on a knowledge of all kinds of experience rather than one kind. In the eyes of society, however, Grimes's act is one of moral criminality, but it links him with certain sorts of material criminality, such as Claire's kidnapping of the ocelot from the zoo and an imaginary conversation with Patrick Pearse. Especially, though, this isolation links him with other outcasts, the woman in his paintings The Sisterhood and the subjects in his frieze 'Here We Are! Where are we off to? Who's coming with us?' This sense of reintegration with these outcasts is essentially mystical, as is the notion of The High Consistory itself, a small band of writers:

> engaged on the composition of what he saw as the revelation of an alternative reality. This great work, comparable, in certain ways, to the original creation, was directed by an Editor-in-Chief who remained shrouded in mystery, communicating with his team by faint and confusing

signals.[1]

Grimes's desire is both to expand his own understanding and to try to reveal something of truth in his paintings, and it is this impulse which leads him to his criminality, since it necessarily challenges society's cherished assumptions. The sense of mystery, the idea of the original creation, and that of a central, dynamic Force - the Editor-in-Chief - with which one must try to communicate is clearly mystical, though, linking mystic with criminal and artist. Gambling, too, is linked with these ideas. The racehorse Tantième is one of the subjects in the frieze, linking racing with the dual sense of isolation and reintegration. Further, Nicole steals money from her employer to make up Grimes's racing losses, after a horse tipped by Ste. Thérèse to win is awarded second place by the judges, clearly associating the gambler with the criminal and mystic. Finally, Grimes gains his redemptive insight through his experience of sacred and profane love. This occurs in three instances. First, Claire's illicit relationship with the ocelot represents sensual, bestial love, which then becomes elevated to a spiritual love as the death of the ocelot becomes a parallel for the death of Christ, in Grimes's imagination. Second, the painting 'The Sisterhood' contains Ste. Thérèse, Claire, Libertas and Katusha from Tolstoy's Resurrection, all of whom have both sacred and sensual associations for Grimes. Thirdly, his illicit relationship with Miranda, who is on the verge of moving from the mundane into the spiritual world, indicates their interdependency.

The process which Grimes and Stuart's other heroes go through is one of moving first into isolation from society in general and then into an integration with some higher truth, in the state of redemption. They

1 The High Consistory, p.320

need to find self-actualisation through unity with a different set of values from conventional ones and it is this, in the first place, which separates them from the consensus. Sometimes this is an unwilling separation: Frank Allen, in Pigeon Irish, for example, is reluctant to leave his familiar way of life with Brigid, for example [1] - but if the hero is to maintain his integrity separation must occur. Separation then develops into a profound sense of isolation, and when parallels are sought for their condition they can be found only in others who have shared the same sense of isolation. In A Hole in the Head, for example, Barnaby Shane seeks guidance for his physical and spiritual isolation as hostage in a besieged house by trying to recall the actions of others in similar extreme circumstances:

> How to spend one of those moments which occur, even to unexceptional people and in mostly undramatic forms, at least once or twice in a lifetime? Dostoievsky's subsequent life remained under the shadow of the mock execution in Semienovsky Square.
> In prayer and meditation? The circumstances, in my own meagre experience and what I glean from reading or hearing about that of others, hardly ever allow of this, even if the person involved had the inclination, not to mention the gift.
> My talk to the old woman, even my brief conversation on the phone with Ruth while she kept vigil beside the catatonics (ignoring, of course, her erotic remark) had induced in me a favourable state of mind. Though mind hardly came into it.
> Had I been one of the lepers mentioned by Gilde, would I have asked Christ for a cure, or for his companionship in the leper ghetto?
> He was the eternal catatonic, awakening at the worst, most shameful moments of history to whisper in an empty room: I thirst. [2]

Dostoyevsky, the old woman who is profoundly deaf, Ruth who was once a mental patient herself, the catatonic patients she sits with, the lepers healed by Christ, are all completely alone, totally isolated, and are all contained and extended by the final, startling image of Christ as

1 See also Dominic de Lacy in The White Hare who tries to escape from his love of Hylla; Dominic Malone in The Pillar of Cloud who is unsure what impells him to go to Germany; and H in Black List, Section H who tries to maintain his failing relationship with Iseult.
2 A Hole in the Head, p. 214.

'the eternal catatonic'. The factors which isolate them, however, contain the seeds of their reintegration. Dostoyevsky's mock execution somehow altered forever his perceptions; Christ's execution was negated by his resurrection. The old woman's isolation has produced an unusual set of perceptions: apart from Shane she is the only person in the novel to have made contact with his muse, Emily Brontë. The catatonic patients are attended by Ruth who supplies their few external needs while they are immersed in their inner, personal world. They are also linked to Christ's suffering and thus, by implication, his resurrection, as are the lepers whose cure is a more dramatic, tangible evidence of their changed state.

The final state of redemption links the hero with some sort of universal, dynamic power, 'that immaterial and final Being, which some philosophers call the Absolute, and most theologians call God'.[1] It is achieved partly through a right apprehension of the relationship between spiritual and mundane qualities, especially sacred and profane love. The life-giving potential of small, everyday events is a part of the communality found through the uniting of physical and spiritual love. In The Pillar of Cloud, for example, Dominic and Halka experience a spiritual and physical companionship which is expressed through the smallest act:

> life was being given to them . . . It was in all that they did, under all that they did . . . In a simple meal that they shared together, opening a tin, slicing the bread . . . There was no division into sensual and spiritual. 2

Here, redemption is an experience of the complete unity and harmony of all things, in which they participate, and which is totally fulfilling.

1 Underhill, p. 4.
2 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 231-2.

As well, though, redemptive insight comes through risk-taking, whether on the race-course or, like Dominic, by leaving home for an uncertain future. A great personal integrity and faith is necessary to push the self into extreme circumstances, to withstand suffering, and thus to find the compassionate understanding through which redemption comes. Just as the redemptive process is communicated by Stuart through an interweaving of themes, so he links to them certain vital motifs which extend and express the nature of redemption.

CHAPTER 4: MOTIF

As Francis Stuart and his work have received more attention recently so an awareness of certain motifs which are important to him - hares, racing, the ark - has crystallised. In part, they have been emphasised by the author himself. He has allowed himself to be photographed holding a Belgian hare,[1] and to be painted with one on his lap.[2] Other photographs as well as easily accessible work emphasise the garden motif - the cover of his record, Alternative Government, the short story 'The Water Garden', some new poems in the recently published selection of his poetry entitled We Have Kept the Faith: New and Selected Poems.[3] At the A Sense of Ireland festival of Irish Arts and Culture held in London in 1980 Stuart's choice for reading aloud was a short story entitled 'Jacob', the major part of which is a description of a horse-race.[4] This interest in the turf is emphasised by the blurbs on the jackets of most of his recently published or reissued novels and has been picked up by recent reviewers, some of whom refer to his little book Racing for Pleasure and Profit in Ireland and Elsewhere,[5] without, however, always being clear about its length or nature.[6]

1 'from The High Consistory', p. 202.

2 Neil Shawcross, 'Francis Stuart', in Hibernian Inscape: A Selection of 12 Irish Artists, by Paul Overy (The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Trinity College, Dublin, 2 December 1980-4 January 1981 and The Arts Council of Northern Ireland Gallery, Belfast, September-October 1981).

3 For example, Francis Stuart, 'The Garden', We Have Kept the Faith: New and Selected Poems (Dublin, 1982), p. 43.

4 The present writer was in attendance at the reading which was held at The National Poetry Centre, London on 12 February, 1980. See The British Library National Sound Archives, NSAT4185WR (C/15/6) for a sound recording of the events. The story is printed in The Irish Press, 9 October 1971, p. 9.

5 The Pillar of Cloud, Redemption, Memorial, A Hole in the Head, The High Consistory.

6 See, for example, Robert Nye, 'Living in the Cracks', Guardian, 15 January 1981, p. 9; Valentine Cunningham, 'The Spell of the Monstrous', Times Literary Supplement, 16 January 1981, p. 51 refers to it as 'a tome'.

Other writers are quite obviously intimately acquainted with Stuart's work, however; the long poem written by the young Irish poet Paul Durcan to comemmorate Stuart's eightieth birthday for instance, refers several times to the ark motif and addresses him by the title of the poem, Ark of the North.[1] This general awareness is valuable because it acknowledges the fact of the importance of certain motifs to Stuart's work. However, it is necessarily limited because it does not take account of their variety, scope and especially their function.

In fact, much of the richness of Stuart's work comes from his extensive use of motif, that is, of a series of repeated images which carries a meaning greater than that of each image in isolation.[2] Richness is achieved partly because the repeated imagery extends and intensifies the meaning of its subject; equally, though, and very important to an overall understanding of his body of work, motif contributes greatly to the internal organisation of his novels and to the cohesiveness of the relationship between them. A brief example demonstrates both these points. Sugrue's litany to Herra, in Memorial, links the hare motif with Herra's suffering, with Mary Magdalene, and thus with the interrelated themes of sacred and profane love, mystic and criminal, and spirituality and the mundane:

1 Paul Durcan, Ark of the North: For Francis Stuart on his Eightieth Birthday, 28 April, 1982 (Dublin, 1982).

2 M. H. Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms, 4th edition (New York, 1981), p. 11 defines motif as 'the frequent repetition of a significant phrase, or set description, or complex of images, in a single work, as in the operas of Richard Wagner, or in novels by Thomas Mann, James Joyce, Virgina Woolf, and William Faulkner'. He suggests that the term is interchangeable with 'the German leitmotif (a guiding motif)'. A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms, edited by Roger Fowler (London, 1973), p. 77 describes motif in the context of form: 'A motif for instance is structural in so far as the images making it up are seen as a chain, textural in so far as each is apprehended sensuously as it comes - and contentual, rather than formal, in so far as the chain carries a meaning that one link, an unrepeated image would not'.

My Herra
And Lazarella,
My delinquent, teenage Mary M.,
My wild and anxious doe,
My bold and timid hare in heat! 1

As well as developing thematic unity the litany also links Stuart's preoccupations with generally held beliefs through the reference to Mary Magdalene, thus drawing on an existing set of references and associations, and with the private, internal myth of Memorial because she is referred to as 'Mary M' (the name used by Herra and Sugrue in their discussions of her throughout the novel) thus emphasising a personal, more specific meaning. Here too, the hare is linked with another common motif in Stuart's work, that of delinquency and with its associated theme of taking risks, through the phrase 'bold and timid' which combines the audacity of delinquency with the apprehensiveness of possible loss. This then suggests heroes and setting in other novels - the fear and determination of H at the racecourse gambling money he can ill afford, for example. Because the hare motif recurs throughout Stuart's work, it is necessary to examine its significance elsewhere as well to fully understand the significance of its use here: thus, Herra the girl and Lazarella the cat have to be seen in relationship to other hares as well as other heroines and their animals. The significance of the hare motif in Memorial is modified by the wider frame of reference of its use elsewhere in Stuart's work, therefore. Further, the hare must also be considered against the background of its appearance in folklore, for a full appreciation of Stuart's use of it in the litany as an archetype of combined power and vulnerability. Finally, when the litany is put back into the context of the novel, the effect of the hare motif on setting, characterisation, tone and style can be assessed.

1 Memorial, p. 195.

As their close relationship indicates, motif and theme share the same broad pattern of organisation in Stuart's work. The hare is perhaps the most important single motif and must be given special treatment; but some of the other major motifs have been encountered in the consideration of theme. Several of them have been seen to be expressions of isolation or estrangement from society and include the hare amongst them: the outsider and the gambler, delinquency, and abnormal states of mind, sometimes including actual insanity. To them may be added disfigurement as the physical equivalent of unusual, isolating mental states. Other motifs have been connected with integration, however, especially that of forming a community. To this can be added the Ark, that is used as the prototype of harmonious living, and expressions of communality, such as the sharing of food and the creating of a garden in the wilderness. Mechanisation is an ambiguous motif: mechanised society is used as representative of the businessman and the spiritually dead in novels such as Good Friday's Daughter but individual examples of aircraft and cars are often associated with excitement and new life.

Motifs do not appear in their literal form always; rather, as the associations of the motif build up they become synecdochal, that is represented by other things which act as 'substitute' or 'metamorphosed' motifs. Good examples of these are the Ark and the hare. The whaling ship in In Search of Love,[1] the houseboat in Victors and Vanquished[2] and the trawler in Memorial[3] are realistic Ark-equivalents but the Ark motif is used constantly to identify the carrier or container of the forces needed for new life. It is the central motif of Pigeon Irish where the carrier pigeons are identified by Catherine with Noah's doves and, as

1 In Search of Love, p. 78-152.
2 Victors and Vanquished, p. 224.
3 Memorial, p. 184.

Frank Allen realises, 'Ireland was the Ark'.[1] In Try in the Sky the new aircraft called 'The Spirit' is 'the new ark';[2] in Redemption the motif is suggested by the name of the hotel where much of the action takes place, Flood's Hotel; Sugrue's old Rolls and the flat to which he and Herra retreat are both identified with Noah's ark in Memorial.[3]

A similar series of metamorphoses affect the hare image, which continues and develops the qualities of vulnerability and defiance found in the trapped rabbit in Stuart's early poem By the Waterfall. In The Coloured Dome the shooting of two Republican hostages is likened to 'potting a sitting hare'[4] and the death of the hare is linked with the sacrificial aspect of the death of the hostages. This sacrificial significance of the hare is developed with greater complexity in The White Hare, where the motif also identifies a love which is hopeless but irresistible. A further thorough use of the motif is made in Memorial where the disparity in the ages of the two lovers does not prevent the consummation of their love - dramatically a real advance from The White Hare - and where the flight of Sugrue and Herra to the devastated setting of the North,[5] and Herra's death there is counterpointed by their attempt to raise hares in captivity and by accounts of the atrocities of hare-coursing. Other animals are also used to symbolise pursuit, vulnerability and eventual destruction: the pigeons in Pigeon Irish, for example and the ocelot in The High Consistory. However, they are not repeated or elaborated as the hare motif is but because they

1 Pigeon Irish, p. 46.
2 Try The Sky, p. 211.
3 See Memorial, p. 9 'we sailed off on the first of our memorable expeditions in the Rolls' and p. 52 'our private haven (ark, as you were already thinking of it)'.
4 The Coloured Dome, p. 236.
5 Compare this evocation of the North of Ireland with that of Belbury in A Hole in the Head. There, the name of Belbury is clearly symbolic: on the one hand, it combines elements of the names 'Belfast' and 'Derry', suggesting that the cities are one in their devastation, on the other hand it suggests the death of beauty, through a pun on 'Bel' for 'belle' and the funereal implication of 'bury'.

carry a similar significance, and the hare is the dominant, consistently used motif associated with those qualities, they can be considered as 'hare -synecdoches' or 'equivalents' of the motif, rather like Lazarella and Herra in the litany. This is not to devalue their own significance as symbols but rather to extend it by linking it to the mainstream of Stuart's use of motif and allowing a clearer discussion and fuller exploration of their meaning.

The association of motif with isolation and integration is important because they are themes in Stuart's work and it is in the framework of his thematic organisation that Stuart's use of motif must be considered. In this context, motif is dynamic, that is, motif which suggests alienation and motif which suggests reintegration work together rather than having a separate effectiveness. The potential for reintegration through the mystical, redemptive experience is always present in motifs of isolation, therefore, while the new life of other motifs springs from the pain, sometimes extreme torment, of isolation which is almost always deliberately self-inflicted. This situation is analogous to that described by Colin Wilson in The Outsider:

> The problem for the 'civilization' is the adoption of a religious attitude that can be assimilated as objectively as the headlines of last Sunday's newspapers. But the problem for the individual always will be the opposite of this, the conscious striving not to limit the amount of experience seen and touched; the intolerable struggle to expose the sensitive areas of being to what may possibly hurt them; the attempt to see as a whole, although the instinct of self-preservation fights against the pain of the internal widening, and all the impulses of spiritual laziness build into long waves of sleep with every new effort. The individual begins that long struggle as an Outsider; he may finish it as a saint. 1

The motif of the 'outsider' in Stuart's work, therefore, encompasses all attempts to find a higher spiritual plane through exposure to various

1 Wilson, p. 295.

kinds of experience. Without these experiences the outsider is doomed, since his world vision, like that ascribed to Keats, obliges him to see through surface-reality to the cruelty or meaninglessness which underlies it, without equipping him to cope with that perception. Therefore, he must find a higher reality if he is to find a reason for living, for, in Stuart's novels, only through this higher reality, or redemptive vision, will he be able to withstand the spiritual pain involved in his world-vision. Initially, therefore, it is necessary to concentrate on the way in which Stuart uses motif to illustrate and extend the theme of redemption. A brief examination of the major motifs used in his first two novels, Women and God and Pigeon Irish, makes clear the cohesiveness of this and provides a useful background against which its elaboration in his later work may be viewed.

Motifs of outsidership are basic to setting and characterisation as well as to theme in Stuart's early work. In Women and God they are used to give a powerfully austere sense of failed relationships and the need for self-knowledge to find a viable basis for living. The hero of the novel, Colin, is equally an outsider in Lourdes and in his home in Ireland. Lourdes is 'a hell of a place'[1] since he believes that the genuine religious experience on which it is based has been submerged by 'religiosity, respectability, pious commercialism, hypocrisy. The by-products of the Church'.[2] When he returns home, however, he finds a scarcely less claustrophobic atmosphere of domesticity:

> They went into the house through the back. Along a dark, stone-flagged passage, with walls on which the lime had never dried. In the drawing-room Frank and Anne were sitting by the tea-table. Baby was sitting on the floor, the firelight on her brown legs, making shine the short golden hairs. The room smelt of hot silver and warm dough. 3

1 Women and God, p. 14.
2 Women and God, p. 18.
3 Women and God, p. 250-1.

He is alienated from Lourdes and his home against his will, however. In Lourdes he had hoped to find 'simple, joyful, unquestioning faith; an oasis of happiness in a dark wilderness'[1] but instead 'he felt his face inevitably set into the wilderness'.[2] Similarly, he believes at one point that his marriage is a 'a hard, clear-cut life'[3] and that he can 'live it simply, without compromise';[4] so, he tries to renounce his dissatisfaction with the relationship, his desire for Laura and his love for Elizabeth. Even as he tries to do so, however, he realises that he is putting himself in a false position:

> 'I've chosen you once and for all,' he added. As he spoke, he thought it was a wild boast. Could he choose? Could anyone choose? [5]

Colin's attempt to find contentment in the status quo is the result of what Wilson calls 'the instinct of self-preservation' and is hopeless. Conventional sexual or religious experience, a simple fall into domestic or pious bliss, cannot provide escape from outsidership, as Colin realises:

> Always lonely and unable to escape from the isolation of loneliness. Trying to escape through religion; trying to escape through women, through a woman . . . But he wanted more; always more. [6]

Instead, he must seek an experience of religion and woman which is not conventional and which may involve a loss of self-determination:

1 Women and God, p. 23.
2 Women and God, p.23.
3 Women and God, p. 144.
4 Women and God, p. 145.
5 Women and God, p. 191.
6 Women and God, p. 23. Compare this with the hero of Saul Bellow, Henderson the Rain King (London, 1959), p. 80: 'A fellow whose heart said, I want, I want. Who played the violin in despair, seeking the voice of angels'.

As soon as one looked for more than the end of physical desire from women one was caught into a deep current. As soon as one began to escape from oneself, whether through women or religion, one was no longer one's own law; one was part of another law. [1]

The new existence may bring painful experiences over which there will be no control since the self has been given up to the 'deep current' and 'another law'.[2] Colin's restlessness obliges him to seek 'more than the end of physical desire from women', that is, not a substitute for physical desire but desire with something more added to it. Colin has not found this potential in women through marriage, the usual expression of sacred and sensual love combined and at Lourdes religion is divorced from sexuality: as Laura says, the pious women there have 'polished noses, and dresses all ending half-way between the knees and the ankles; the only unbecoming place for a dress to end'.[3] Instead, Colin must make contact with the 'deep current' through someone who is in touch with it and thus feels more keenly the same sense of alienation.

Colin finds this in Elizabeth, a young girl who is suffering from tuberculosis of the bone, and whose diseased body but inner peace marks her out from the women in the novel.[4] The motif of her physical disfigurement but spiritual wholeness is complex. At first it seems as though her illness is only a reflection of the ineffectuality of Lourdes, its inability to provide the healing miracles for which it has

1 Women and God, p. 23. See also Pigeon Irish, p. 211: 'Human love and passion could not satisfy that insatiable spirit. It wanted love, but an everlasting love, passion, romance.'

2 In Pigeon Irish Frank's is a more willing embrace of a new existence, summed up by his repetition to Catherine of the words the condemned nobleman said to Catherine of Sienna, 'Stay with me and do not abandon me. So shall I fare not otherwise than well'. (p. 277).

3 Women and God, p. 19.

4 In Pigeon Irish, p. 104, Catherine suffers from 'pains in my head and stomach. All sorts of pains'.

its reputation underlining the sterility of its religion. However, a miracle does occur and although it takes place in Paris, not Lourdes, its agent is a cheap statue of Our Lady of Lourdes which pierces Elizabeth's hand at the moment she is cured. The one wound heals the other and since the healing is a profound experience of spiritual completeness there is a clear indication that Elizabeth's disfigurement was a necessary part of her spiritual development. The description of her healing is a mystical combination of an extreme pain which gives way to a suffusion of divine love:

> Pain licked, like a flame, about her flesh. A forked, invisible flame, swaying within her as in a slight breeze and making her tremble in agony at every touch of its searing tongue. Yet, she still felt that she was being consumed, burnt up, by a fire not of earth. By a fire that, at a certain moment, would sear her no longer, but would shine about her and in her and through her; the furnace of uncreated love, into which she would plunge; was even now feeling the first faint ripples of. 1

The 'forked, invisible flame' is like the Pentecostal one, bringing a new, unexpected, miraculous understanding, but it is also purgatorial, a purification before her union with the Godhead, here expressed as 'uncreated love', that is absolute, primal love. Her disease now becomes a mark of distinction, singling her out for a higher experience; her isolation, therefore, becomes a positive force rather than a negative, lonely one.[2] The cheap statue in this context represents simple, unsophisticated faith, a return to the original spirit of Lourdes and the crude but genuine devotion of simple pilgrims, which

1 Women and God, p. 96-7.

2 In Pigeon Irish, p. 104, Catherine's pains represent an endurance which is spiritually sophisticated in its simple acceptance; she says 'I'm glad of them. It's sweet to have to bear pain if one doesn't rebel against it. Sometimes its's hard not to rebel. And sometimes it's very easy to bear everything and remain full of peace'. Compare this with the revelations of Julian of Norwich, which took place during an acute illness. After the penultimate revelation, 'I was brought to great rest and peace, without sickness of body or dread of conscience'. Revelations of Divine Love, p. 167.

reaffirms its sanctity while at the same time questioning the atmosphere of false piety which has grown up around it. The miracle links spiritual and physical worlds, curing the tuberculosis, making Elizabeth's relationship with the Godhead a deeply personal one and allowing her to experience the 'simple, joyful, unquestioning faith' which Colin sought. Through the miracle, the motif of disfigurement changes from one of isolation into one of integration and thus introduces the idea of an agency which can bring about change without itself being changed because of its special nature. The healing of Elizabeth is the catalyst which leads Colin to reintegration. He realises that he can no longer compromise since the miracle has revealed an absolute and pure power which makes all compromise seem unacceptable. First, he is obliged to give up his attempt to maintain his relationship with Laura:

> Only a couple of hours ago, before Elizabeth's cure, he had been trying to fit her in, to compromise. He had half-written a letter to Anne. He had meant to finish it later. In the cold, almost harsh light of that miracle the over-mixed colours of his life had become nauseous. 1

Then, he realises the suffocating hopelessness of his life with Anne, and is overcome by a sense of despair, which links him with all suffering, including that of the people he has caused to suffer: Laura, his wife and his child. He understands, too, the suffering of Christ on the Cross, in a vision which is similar in pain and intensity to that of Elizabeth before her cure and which must, therefore, hold out a hope that Colin will experience a similar reintegration in spite of, or rather because of, his terrible sense of guilt and loss.

The transition from outsidership to reintegration is not automatic; the potential of isolation to lead to reintegration is not always

1 Women and God, p. 140. Similarly, in Pigeon Irish, p. 281 Frank is forced to leave Brigid, telling her 'I haven't any home.'

realised. Much depends on the state of mind of the individual and whether or not he wishes to force himself through the painful process involved. There is, therefore, a distinction to be made between apparently similar states of mind. Colin and Elizabeth are both in unusual, alienated states of mind and both try their hardest to escape from them. Anne, however, is equally isolated but content to increase her self-absorption, to cut herself off still more from any other experience and to retreat further into herself:

> For only at times did her life seem to her important enough, real enough, to meet with all her faculties awake, carefully, thoughtfully. So often she remained as though automatically performing the daily actions of life, without thought or any interest. And then, when he spoke to her she might not answer for several minutes, as though his voice had been held up from entering her mind while strange thoughts dissolved before it. [1]

Like the mystic, Anne cuts herself off from the real world, but her inward journey is into fantasy and long dead romance of 'an intangible heroic atmosphere . . . from the Iliad or the Morte d'Arthur'[2] not an attempt to perceive universal truths. It is self-deluding, rather than revelatory and her absorption, therefore, is sterile. This is emphasised by her oscillation between a dislike of sexual love - 'she would have liked to have slept in bed with him with a naked sword between them'[3] - and an occasional responsiveness which highlights her usual lack of enthusiasm rather than moderating it. So, she does not see the redemptive state and cannot act as a catalyst, cannot provide

1 Women and God, p. 149-150. Compare this with Redemption, p. 201: 'He remembered her so often like that as they had talked, sitting there listening with a kind of absent-mindedness as though his words never really reached her, as though she heard them behind a veil of cigarette smoke.'
2 Women and God, p. 148-9.
3 Women and God, p. 149. Compare this with Pigeon Irish, p. 211, where Brigid is limited to sensual love, without any of the mystical love which suffuses Catherine; and with Leonore in Victors and Vanquished, p. 283; and with Nancy in Redemption, p. 198-203.

the 'deep current' needed by Colin to find reintegration.

The motif of woman as spiritual healer, which is an important integrative motif in Stuart's work, throws an interesting light onto Elizabeth's illness. In the novel, the redemptive state must be approached through a combination of sexual and sacred love and since it is 'more than the end of physical desire' that is sought, sexual love is subjugated to spiritual love. Elizabeth's experience of sacred love and her role as representative of it is made clear by her faith in Lourdes and her decision to enter a convent, but her physical potency is represented by her physical abnormality. This disfigurement enhances her sexuality while at the same time making it inaccessible and throwing the emphasis onto the more important area of divine, spiritual love. The penetration of her hand by the sharp metal of the cheap statue, its bleeding, and the subsequent healing of the wound operate as an inexact but powerful metaphor of sexual experience - the wound is 'on the palm beneath her thumb'[1], that is, in the part of the hand known as the Mount of Venus - while continuing that emphasis. In thus suggesting the primacy of spiritual experience over sensual experience in the sexual act Stuart both emphasises the importance of the thematic unity of sacred and profane love and introduces the motif of woman's sexuality as a source of spiritual comfort, and new life, which is elaborated later.[2] Disfigurement becomes the emblem of the saviour as well as of the outsider, and the motif of woman as spiritual healer is ramified by that of the 'woman-Christ', although both motifs are used to suggest a super-sensitivity to spiritual states and an ability to bring these about rather than 'goodness' in conventional moral terms. There is, therefore, a movement from outsidership to integration through the motif

1 Women and God, p. 102.
2 The sexual status of Catherine is implied by the newspaper report which calls her Frank's 'fanatic mistress' (p. 284) and, perhaps, by them being the only pair to go 'into the ark' (p. 282).

of woman as a spiritual healer in its developed form of 'woman Christ'.

* * * * * * *

A further important motif of integration is horse-racing, which, in Women and God, symbolises both spiritual and material risk to Elizabeth:

> It had required the same will-power for her to become a Catholic as did the putting of large bets she had already won on to outsiders. And both were for her part of a plan of living. To have gone home from the races with a lot of money because after winning it she had refused to risk it on the last race would have been, for her, a weakness; a forsaking of her code of life. Everything must be risked, everything given. 1

At the end of the novel, Frank tells Colin 'The November Handicap's a gift for Le Voleur'.[2] In context with Colin's vision of Christ's crucifixion and the idea of risking all on an outsider, Le Voleur, the thief, evokes very powerfully that one of the two crucified criminals who put all of his trust in Christ and was rewarded, according to the Gospel of St Luke:

> One of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. 3

The horse-racing motif provides the clearest link between gambler and mystic and their shared need to take risks to find redemption. In the novel, though, the excitement of horse-racing is matched by the

1 Women and God, p. 105.
2 Women and God, p. 251.
3 Luke 23. 39-43. Compare Stuart's use of the idea that one criminal found spiritual fulfilment with Samuel Beckett's use of it in Waiting for Godot - especially the discussion about it between Vladimir and Estragon - and in Murphy, where Neary says 'Do not despair . . . Remember also one thief was saved.' (p. 213).

excitement of motor-racing. On a long, fast night-drive in an attempt to make the starting time of motor-race, Frank compares his Mercédès car with Elizabeth and sees them both as containing the spirit of beauty:

> He looked at Elizabeth standing in the road, the long black silhouette of the car behind her. It's a young, lithe, subtle thing like her, he thought. Without any complex about immortality. In a year or two it would be out of date, noisy, clumsy, ridiculous, and he would buy another, a Mercédès too, probably, that would carry on the same spirit, the beauty of perfection. And there would be other women, always; when Elizabeth was forty, there would be girls of twenty in whom this spirit of charm, of joyous gravity would be continued, and so for ever. But she, he thought, and Laura and myself and all, will grow old and dull and unattractive, and finally die and rot and be gone. 1

Here, Frank sees an eternal quality in mechanization since it is continually being remade and continually striving towards a greater perfection. He contrasts its ability to remake itself with the transience of human beauty without realising, of course, that Elizabeth is to seek a spiritual process of remaking in the convent. In a sense, then, as the new Mercédès supersedes the old so Elizabeth's loss of physical beauty can be superseded by a new spiritual life, so that both are representative of some absolute, eternal quality without being eternal themselves. Machinery can be life-giving and can contribute to an act of tender care on an intimate level. The motif reinforces the themes of spirituality and the mundane, therefore, since mechanisation can operate both as an expression of perfect beauty and as homely caring. However, that potential is not always realised and where mechanisation is abused it reflects a sterility and a sense of cynicism and hopelessness. This is the case in Dr Bailey's description of a society ruled by money, where even feelings could be bought and grafted scientifically onto the brain:

1 Women and God, p. 119.

> No one would get married who could afford to buy all the reactions, physical and mental, that marriage provides. They would buy the necessary material forms, the chemical conjunctions, and have them grafted on to their brain . . . Belief could also be bought. Different beliefs. 1

Money, of course, is the basis of such a mechanical society and consistent with Stuart's view of the businessman, it is used to purchase a safe approximation to real experience rather than to find an intense, hazardous excitement, such as that present in Elizabeth's gambling. The idea that belief could be bought picks up some of the sense of false piety which Colin felt in Lourdes, which confims this abuse of mechanisation as ultimately deadening and opposed to any real, vital experience.

Similarly, the motif of food and eating can symbolise either a sense of sharing and communality, or, by the absence of that feeling, a sense of estrangement. When Colin returns to Anne in an attempt to immerse himself in their married life, they lunch together at a local hotel as a gesture of their renewed determination to love each other. However, the meal simply shows the distance there is between them:

> They ate mutton and potatoes and boiled dried peas; afterwards they had apple tart. There was tinned coffee mixed in boiling water. Colin thought it was great. 2

His appreciation of the rather drab food is not shared by Anne who tells their daughter that they had a lovely time, but 'Not the lunch, though. That wasn't so nice'. 3 For Colin, the occasion of their sharing food transforms the food itself into something 'great'; Anne's critical view of it reflects a lack of commitment to the occasion and underlines her

1 Women and God, p. 216-7.
2 Women and God, p. 197.
3 Women and God, p. 198.

essential refusal to make contact with a world outside that of her deliberately insular one. The inability to share the experience of eating with Colin, to let the sense of the occasion be more important than her distaste for the food, indicates the futility of them attempting to share the deeper experience of marriage and the essentially spiritual understanding to which such a relationship should lead.

By contrast, however, the colony which Frank and Catherine intend to form in Pigeon Irish appears to hold out real possibilities of fulfilling its intention of maintaining the spiritual values of Ireland against the new civilisation. This is because it is based essentially on spiritual values while at the same time including physical expressions of them. Sacred and profane love are intertwined; for example, Catherine says 'If the thing Ireland stands for is swamped in this new civilisation, all the intimate human love that has thrived and grown in Ireland will be torn and thwarted' and Frank thinks 'As soon as there was no mystery left in life, as soon as the mystery of sex and religion was laid bare by a process of rationalisation, love between men and women would suffer'.[2] By destroying its mystery rationalisation destroys love as mechanisation destroyed real experience. The two are combined in the new civilisation which takes a scientific view of life to its logical conclusion:

> 'Look what was coming in on the radio before it was finally made impossible. Everything was killed. Everything was reduced to chemicism. Love, religion, everything. They're working out the logical conclusion of that,' she said.
>
> 'How? What's the logical conclusion?' Brigid asked.
>
> 'I don't know. Science controlling life. Hygiene. Hygienic love. A psychotherapic religion,' Catherine said. [3]

1 Pigeon Irish, p. 190.
2 Pigeon Irish, p. 191.
3 Pigeon Irish, p. 58.

The colonies Catherine proposes, therefore, represent mystical, non-rational understanding, in a communality which defies common-sense and makes nonsense of the logical, material world. It is this feeling which impels Frank to defend them against Malone's contemptuous description of their likely appearance:

> 'You'd have a street of turf commission agents, public-houses, and convents. And outside the model town you could wall off a bit of mountain and bog with a few mud cottages, a round tower and a race course.'
>
> 'You're about right, Malone,' I said. 'You've got the externals pretty right. But what you haven't got clear is the unique mentality that only thrives on these contrasts.' 1

In terms of the themes Stuart develops in his work, these contrasts represent the spiritual and mundane elements which are generated by the universal forces of redemption and which, when combined, can lead to the redemptive state. The convent and the racecourse are both capable of leading towards redemptive insight in a mystical process which is alien to rational thought. The communality of Frank and Catherine has a spiritual base which redefines all other relationships and indicates that it is a new spiritual life which the colony will bring, and that the emphasis is on this rather than on a solely sexual relationship between them. This spirituality is important in understanding the idea of sacrifice which is associated with forming the colony. Catherine tells Frank that she will wait for him 'at the holy place of execution',[2] repeating the words of St. Catherine to a young Siennese nobleman about to be executed. The idea of a blood-sacrifice is not carried through in these terms, however, for Frank's execution is a death of the self, the humiliation of court-martial, his rejection by his wife, the savage pillorying of him by the Press, his ejection from

1 Pigeon Irish, p. 185.
2 Pigeon Irish, p. 78-9; see also p. 277.

the military camp and the laughter of the guards as he and Catherine leave together. This 'spiritual death' is symbolised and paralleled by the real death of the pigeons, first of Buttercup then of Conquistador, which in turn leads to the new life given to Conquistador by the archangels. By implication, Frank will also find this new life and the sacrifice thus becomes regenerative rather than a martydrom. The colony is in a similar position since it will preserve the spirit of Ireland at the cost of allowing the new civilisation to take over the rest of the country outside the colony:

> I saw that Catherine was right. She had said, 'You'll have to sacrifice the body of Ireland for the soul.' What she meant was a military surrender on condition that the colonies would not be interfered with. 1

There is, therefore, a deliberate rejection of a blood-sacrifice such as that favoured by Patrick Pearse,[2] for example, in preference of a mystical experience from which will spring a new life which is essentially spiritual. The line between the two may be thin but it is quite definite; early in the novel, there is a clear discrimination made between being martyred and following a way of life which is similar to martyrdom in its isolation and suffering but which does not lead automatically to physical death:

> 'We can only save Ireland from being engulfed, by suffering. Like the early Christians,' she said. 'They kept the faith by being martyred. It was only much later that they had military victories on their side. We'll have to go back to that.'
> 'To martyrdom?'

1 Pigeon Irish, p. 184.

2 See, for example, Patrick Pearse, 'The Mother', The Literary Writings of Patrick Pearse, edited by Seámas Ó Buachalla (Dublin and Cork, 1979), p. 27, in which the narrator gladly sacrifices:

> 'My two strong sons that I have seen go out
> To break their strength and die, they and a few,
> In bloody protest for a glorious thing.'

'It depends. To living like martyrs,' she said.[1]

The death of Buttercup is the closest approximation in the novel to a blood-sacrifice for the salvation of Ireland:

> this pigeon, Buttercup, in whom the scar had beome a wound again, about to open to a fountain of blood. This latest blossom of the tended stem about to shed itself in a rainbow of petals. A living rainbow, the last sign of Divine mercy above this second flood. 2

Even this, however, has a rather different significance when viewed against the rest of the novel. The rainbow is the promise of the end of destruction, not the beginning of it and the image, therefore, is spiritual in its significance, not temporal. Death, too, is distanced by the procreative image of it as falling petals from a plant which will grow more; and by the image of sexual initiation, of lost virginity or new womanhood in 'the scar had become a wound again.' These images of flowers and sexual maturity suggest a spiritual growth and development which makes the blood sacrifice part of a natural process of continuing life, suggestive of Adam as well as Noah, rather than a dramatic, ritualistic part of war.

Since Catherine is referred to as 'Miss Catherine Noah' and Ireland as the ark, Pigeon Irish also raises the question of the political implications of using an injured girl to symbolise Ireland. Because disfigurement has been seen to be a mark of increased spiritual understanding and unity with the force of redemption, a simple equation of crippled girl with a country crippled by partition might seem possible, with the healing of the girl representing a united, Republican

1 Pigeon Irish, p. 79.
2 Pigeon Irish, p. 141. H. J. O'Brien, 'St Catherine of Siena in Ireland', Eire-Ireland, 6, no. 2 (Summer, 1971), 98-110 also examines this passage as part of his general discussion of Stuart's characterization of Catherine.

Ireland.[1] There is an element of this at one level in Pigeon Irish, certainly; the split between Headquarters and military outposts is similar to the division between Free State and Republican factions in the Civil War period, identifying the inhuman 'super-civilisation' with Britain and the rest of Western civilisation. In this interpretation, the martyred Frank and Catherine represent the faithful few, like Ernie O'Malley, who tried to preserve the original vision of a united Republican Ireland when it was a lost cause to everyone else, and who waited in spiritual exile to reassert that vision when the time was ripe. As a total interpretaion, however, it is unsatisfactory. It is too limiting, since it does not allow comparison with other novels with different settings but similar uses of motif, and in the context of Stuart's body of work a number of factors argue against the primary importance of political allusion. First, that orthodox political stance would demand an orthodox religious attitude to complement it, which is not present in Stuart's work. Secondly, the motif of disfigurement emphasises the spiritual aspect of worldly experience rather than celebrating worldly power. Thirdly, the motifs of integration with which the motifs of outsidership are connected do not include involvement with temporal power. Elizabeth finds her vocation in a convent in Women and God and although Catherine and Frank in Pigeon Irish leave to form a small community in which they hope to preserve the traditional values of Ireland, it is spiritual and aesthetic values with which they are concerned. Indeed, in Pigeon Irish Frank and Catherine

1 If political metaphors are sought, the novel's sympathies must be Republican. In his review of Ernie O'Malley's The Singing Flame Stuart comments that the Four Courts battle 'was largely instrumental in my taking part in the civil war. And also in my writing a novel called Pigeon Irish a little later, in which a disguised O'Malley appears and where the execution of four members of the garrison, Mellows, O'Conner, Barrett and McKilvey, forms one of the themes.' (Francis Stuart, 'The Idealists Worsted in the Game', Sunday Press, 23 April 1978, p. 21).

are alienated from both the official government and its breakaway military opposition. Finally, too, the intimacy and personal scale of the solutions to their outsidership found by Stuart's crippled heroines argues against any intent to pose large-scale political solutions, and this symbolism also distances his intentions from the political arena. In the poem 'Ireland' (1944)[1] for example, he again represents Ireland as 'our shelter and ark' a place of security in the middle of war-torn Europe. Although the war is a real one in this case, that only heightens the power of the image, extending it from an immediate, geographical security into an eternal, mythical place of hope and sustenance, 'Drifting through ages with tilted fields awash,/Steeped with your few lost lights in the long Atlantic dark.'

The redefinition of reality in mythical terms, or what might perhaps be better called the interpenetration of past and present in a sort of eternal recurrence, is an important function of motif, and is particularily marked in Stuart's use of the ark. This motif is used in Pigeon Irish to express preservation of life so that it can be begun anew. Catherine identifies her pigeons with Noah's dove and herself with Noah, with the words she engraves on a pigeon's leg-ring:

'The words about Noah sending out a dove. "He send forth a dove from him to see if the flood was abated from off the face of the earth." Only I put "She sent forth a dove from her."' [2]

This identification is accepted by Frank who sees Ireland as being the ark:

1 We Have Kept the Faith: New and Selected Poems, p. 35. First published in The Capuchin Annual (1944) p. 325.
2 Pigeon Irish, p. 56.

'Miss Catherine Noah,' Brigid said.
'Miss Catherine Noah's ark,' I added, thinking of Ireland. 1

The new civilisation which has engulfed Europe and is threatening Ireland is symbolised as the flood, therefore:

'It's obvious what civilisation has come to. Not only this war. It's the end of one era. Everything is going to start again afresh. Like after the flood.' 2

The ark is a motif of trust as well as hope. It carries the seed of new life by preserving the best of the old and thus reaffirms the virtue of the original creation. The distinction is the same as that between redemption and rebirth; the former argues a development of an original state while the latter substitutes a new state and by so doing denies the original state. Trust or faith is thus the decisive factor in committing oneself to whatever is represented by the ark; hence the appropriateness of Catherine's analogy of them to the early Christians who 'kept the faith'. It is a gamble, therefore, and through this shared idea of hazarding everything in pursuit of a belief, the ark motif is linked with gambler and mystic. Malone's dismissive description of Catherine's colony now takes on a new significance since the round tower, convent and racecourse themselves are incorporated into the ark motif. As this indicates, however, the ark is a symbol of exclusion as well as of inclusion. Eventually the ark is associated with colonies rather than with the whole of Ireland since they are to preserve the true spirit of the country: Catherine tells Frank 'You have to know what things to take into the ark and what to leave out'. 3 Government is excluded because it is inessential and its spirit belongs

1 Pigeon Irish, p. 57.
2 Pigeon Irish, p. 58; see also p. 37.
3 Pigeon Irish, p. 104; see also p. 142-3.

to the materialistic, temporal world of the new civilisation:

'Do you suggest the Government being removed to one of these unoccupied territories?'
'No, I don't. I don't want anyone to form part of these colonies but picked communities. Men and women who are Irish heart and soul. Who could be trusted to keep the faith,' I said. . .
'You're not going to take a specimen of every species into your ark?' Malone asked.
'Not that species. They'll get on all right outside.' 1

Malone and the rest of the rest of the Staff are an excluded species too, but excluded by their own lack of faith, shown by their refusal to help in preserving the spirit of Ireland.[2] Since Frank and Catherine are both the sole members of the 'ark' and the pair who form a community, these two motifs interpenetrate here. There is a certain progression, therefore, from the one to the other, with the colony they will form representing the success and survival of their ark while also continuing its sense of shared trust and optimism.

* * * * * * *

From these beginnings Stuart develops and interrelates motifs of integration and outsidership, and both Women and God and Pigeon Irish provide good examples of their harmonising. In Pigeon Irish particularily, the juxtaposition of pigeons and people, its emphasis on the ark motif and its essentially mystical tone means that, as one reviewer put it, 'the least act of trivial comment seems charged with

1 Pigeon Irish, p. 186-7.
2 A similar idea is expressed in a rather different way in "from 'Who Fears To Speak?'", Journal of Irish Literature, p. 72. There, the various transformations of Noah's Ark are described, first into the Ark of the Covenant, then into 'more unlikely and disturbing shapes that nobody had foreseen: that of a manger, a long trestle table, and finally, a tomb or sepulchre'. From there 'it remained holy in the hearts and imaginations of the persecuted, the poor, artists and prisoners' until recently it has been 'spiritually defused' and obliged 'to take on the shapes that our greed, cruelty, fake idealism and despair gave it, all the gadgets required for a spiritless and comfortable existence . . . ending, at least for time being, in the telly-cum-ballot-box!'

least act of trivial comment seems charged with significance'[1] and this rich texture encourages a great interrelationship between motif. This is evident in the use of the pigeons as a motif of both isolation and new life. They are alienated because they fly above the battlefield which has engulfed Europe and because they are like Noah's dove and raven, alone above the flooded world; like those archetypes, too, they represent the promise of new life:

> The dove and the raven, who had flown together over the waste of the flood at its full tide seeking for a sign of the Divine forgiveness, were his progenitors. Their seed had sprouted out of the damp warm earth, fertile after the flood, through the centuries into the race of homing birds. [2]

Their mythological significance is extended to a mystical significance, too, since Buttercup and Conquistador must die and be resurrected. Buttercup's death represents God's mercy, through the rainbow image and Conquistador carries that a stage further to a total reintegration with the 'archangels'; both are representative of man's salvation, therefore, and thus in a sense both are connected with the idea of Christ's mission of salvation. It is made explicit that both pigeons share the same fate, that 'as there had gone into the ark man and woman, cock and hen, so out from this other ark, Conquistador alone might go but behind him was Buttercup'.[3] So, the pigeons both symbolise Christ, Noah and archetypal man and woman; further, since their experiences parallel those of Frank and Catherine both people and pigeons extend each other's significance. The motif is complex, therefore, and in that complexity unites other motifs of outsidership with other motifs of integration. Through the use of the pigeons, physical death is intertwined with

1 Anonymous review of Pigeon Irish, Times Literary Supplement, 11 February 1932, p. 92.
2 Pigeon Irish, p 140-1.
3 Pigeon Irish, p 141.

spiritual death and the new life that follows; the naturalistic wartime setting of disorder and destruction becomes symbolic of a world which has lost touch with spiritual values; central characters are linked with Christ's suffering and redemptive power and with the faith of Noah; thus, the colony takes on a universal significance as a centre of new life and spiritual power and through this universality, the major themes associated with the idea of redemption are interrelated.

The degree of interrelationship between motifs increases in Stuart's later work so that the division into two separate groups becomes less useful. The states of alienation and reintegration are present as separate entities in the plot of the novels, where the central character proceeds from one state to the other as part of the redemptive process, but in almost every other way they are inseparable. This has been seen to be the case with themes, where redemption has been identified as the force which actually generates the two states through which it is approached; in his latest novel, The High Consistory, it is true of narrative form too, since the chronology of Simeon Grimes's experiences is disarrayed; and as his use of motif is developed so the differences between motifs of outsidership and motifs of integration blur and resolve themselves.

The pivot of this general movement towards unity in motif is the motif of the hare. An overview of Stuart's work shows that all other motifs are related to it, that it provides a junction, but not a stopping-point, for preoccupations such as madness, physical disability, salvation, and motifs such as the ark, making a garden, taking risks, and woman as spiritual healer. The motifs exist independently but converge on the hare motif, flowing through it, so to speak, to emerge with an identity that then partakes of elements of the other motifs and is, therefore, finally inseparable from them. It is surprising, perhaps, that this never makes the hare motif itself stale or moribund:

partly this is because it is used with a fleeting allusiveness in the novels where it appears and partly because in other novels other creatures, too, act as 'hare synecdoches', providing both variety and richness as they add their peculiar characteristics to a motif which is concerned with a combination of power, vulnerability, and regeneration after destruction.

The choice of the hare to succeed the pigeon is an interesting and unusual one. Clearly, there were certain limitations attached to the continued use of the pigeon, successful as it was in Pigeon Irish. It had a general significance as well as the particular significance which Stuart gave it and because the dove is used as a common emblem of peace, a war-time setting was almost inevitable. As well, the identification with Noah's dove had to be insisted on if a more complex spiritual meaning was to emerge. Finally, much of its impact came from the use of the 'pigeon Irish' in which the thoughts and experiences of the birds was reported, a device which is imaginative and entertaining when used once but which could not be repeated profitably. The hare, on the other hand, seems to have provided the right sort of mythological and folkloric associations without being so well-known a symbol as to limit the personal significance with which Stuart wanted to invest it. How far Stuart was aware of the traditional associations of the hare when he began to use it as a motif must be conjectural, of course, but there can be little doubt that since he uses it extensively, his knowledge must be detailed.[1] That this is so is confirmed by a brief passage in Memorial

1 Memorial, p. 221: 'I once shot one running from hounds. Well, when I opened that hare I was never so much surprised. There wasn't a mite of blood in it. That blood was all gone in pink bubbles . . . It had run the life out of itself. They'd been hunting that thing for nearly half-an-hour.' The passage is taken from a longer one, with some minor differences, in George Ewart Evans and David Thomson, The Leaping Hare (London, 1972), p. 65. In Memorial, Stuart suggests it comes from a much older work - its owner says that it has 'been in the house since I was a boy' (p. 221) - which may imply long familiarity with the sort of material it contains.

which quotes from the work by George Ewart Evans and David Thomson, The Leaping Hare (1972) and for this reason it may be convenient at this point to summarise the major traditional associations of the hare.

The associations of the hare are varied. It is associated with solitude, perhaps because in its natural habitat it does not live in groups and after mating buck and doe do not live together. A completely white hare is very rare indeed and perhaps for this reason they are regarded as rather ominous, signifying that a storm was coming,[1] or having an association with faithlessness:

> Girls who died forsaken by their lovers were said to return in the form of white hares. Only the faithless lover would, in most of these stories, be able to see the hare. In all, it follows him everywhere, sometimes saving him from danger, but invariably causing his death in the end.[2]

Traditionally, too, the hare is associated with 'March madness', an unusual form of behaviour in which 'it throws all caution to the wind and becomes the opposite of the timid creature that will leap precipitately and hurl itself from danger';[3] through this behaviour, it has associations with quick wit and intuition which enable it to overcome much stronger adversaries.[4]

The hare has sacred as well as supernatural associations, In Amorindian legend it appears as Michabo, the Great Hare, who is the first creator, maker of sun, moon and earth.[5] Elsewhere, in the

1 Evans and Thomson, p. 214.
2 Evans and Thomson, p. 164.
3 Evans and Thomson, p. 113.
4 Evans and Thomson, p. 114. Interestingly, the hare appears in a variety of forms in contemporary Western culture: as a symbol of aloof, menacing power in James Thurber's cartoon sequence, The Race of Life; as a benign, mischievous pookah in Mary Chase's play, Harvey; and as quick-witted, relaxed superiors to man in the cartoon hare-synechdoches of Bugs Bunny and Snoopy.
5 Evans and Thomson, p. 130.

mythology of Easter, the hare lays eggs and stands for re-creation.[1] It is, therefore, a symbol of regeneration, like the phoenix with its cleansing fire and resulting resurrection, or like the ark's potential for new life. Indeed, in some diluvial legends, it is a hare, not a bird, which is released to see if the waters have subsided.[2] These myths point to a deeper spiritual significance, to the rebirth of the soul as well as of the body, and to sacrifice, redemption and resurrection in a Christian context. This association may have been supported by the long-held belief that the hare either changed sex from month to month or else was completely hermaphrodite, since 'the god or the perfect human being is spiritually and physically hermaphrodite, as Adam was before Eve was taken out of his body and made into a separate person.'[3] Further, taking Saint Maximus as his authority, Johannes Scotus Erigena asserted that Christ at his Resurrection 'was neither male nor female.'[4] Some of these associations are directly relevant to Stuart's work - the traditional association of the hare with forsaken love and storm especially, and others such as its connection with isolation, unusual frames of mind, and the links with spiritual regeneration are clearly relevant to study of his work. It now remains to examine his use of the hare motif and its effectiveness in the context of other motifs; perhaps the easiest way of approaching this is by examining some extended uses of the hare motif and then returning to

1 Evans and Thomson, p. 130.
2 Evans and Thomson, p. 130.
3 Evans and Thomson, p. 25.
4 H. Bett, Johannes Scotus Erigena: A Study in Medieval Philosophy (Cambridge, 1925), p. 78. The most well-know expression of the idea that the division into sexes is a debasement of man's original condition appears in Plato's Symposium, from which Yeats takes his image of perfection in 'Among School Children' . . . "to alter Plato's parable,/Into the yolk and white of the one shell". A striking characteristic of Julian of Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love, p. 147-151 is her conception of the motherhood of God and 'Mother Jesus' whose pain on the cross, which allowed man's spiritual rebirth, is like the throes of birth, and who nurtures man as a mother nurtures her child.

the motifs already delineated in order to examine their development and their relationship to the hare motif.

The first such use occurs in The White Hare where it represents the doomed love of the child Dominic and the young woman Hylla. More specifically, it is identified first with Hylla herself, by Dominic:

'What is it you smell of, Hylla?' he asked, raising his face. 'Like some small wild thing, I think. A cold sort of smell like a white hare perhaps if you bury you nose in its fur.' 1

The white hare means more than just a simple physical identification to him, however:

The White Hare! To him it was 'the' not 'a', because it had become for him an almost mythical animal. A symbol in his imagination of his own destiny, as he put it to himself, without exactly knowing what he meant. A symbol, too, of Hylla, which to him was no contradiction, because his destiny was somehow bound up with her. 2

On the morning that Hylla marries his older brother Dominic starts a white hare and kills it while out coursing with his greyhound, Princess. The short fast run of the hare and its sudden death is a metaphor for the fate of Dominic and Hylla, as Dominic realises:

He saw in it an omen whose significance he half guessed. This was his fate, and this was Hylla. Both would come true for him, both would become one for a moment, and then nevermore. It would be the end. That is what he read in it, and that was enough for him. He understood it sufficiently; he did not want to understand it any better. And understanding, he was both joyous and afraid. 3

The killing is a symbolic marriage of Hylla and Dominic which dominates the real marriage taking place elsewhere. Because their love is

1 The White Hare, p. 129.
2 The White Hare, p. 149.
3 The White Hare, p. 150-1.

socially unacceptable it cannot be celebrated in any conventional way but only through a symbolic expression of its emotional and spiritual significance. Symbolically, it is a sort of suicide for Dominic, which is appropriate since he is deliberately to sacrifice his life by taking ship on an unseaworthy vessel. It is also a killing of Hylla, though, which harks back to the association between love and death which Stuart made in his early poem 'Criminals'. Here, too, the death is joyous as well as fearful, but it has less of ectasy and more of sober acceptance than the earlier death. In the death of the hare Dominic and Hylla are united and it becomes, therefore, a death of the physical, fleshly love which is a barrier between them. This releases and makes possible the spiritual union of their 'destiny' or their 'fate'; the motif neatly encapsulates the transition from the mundane to the spiritual, therefore.

There are traditional associations present too, most noticeably the rather inexact use of the association of white hares with deserted love (in a sense both Dominic and Hylla are forced to desert each other although only Dominic undergoes a physical death) and with storms at sea. Another traditional association of the hare, with madness, also introduces the motifs of risking everything, of delinquency, and of states of madness. Both Hylla and Dominic are prone to unusual, reckless gestures to give expression to the sense of vitality they feel within them; Dominic says 'I love mad things'[1] and undertakes a dangerous night ride, and Hylla on one occasion runs over high, dangerous rocks 'as though driven to expend all the passion in her in this delirious dance'.[2] The thing which they risk is their life and the risk is taken with no thought for others or themselves but to fulfil an internal craving which is both distraught and passionate. It is not a

1 The White Hare, p. 127.
2 The White Hare, p. 183.

barren passion, however, since it is linked with spiritual rebirth through the motif of the hare; at the moment of Dominic's death, too, the emphasis is on the sense of union between Hylla and himself and the joy which he gains from that, since 'when he whispered her name over and over it was not in anguish or despair but with an inflection of surprise at the miracle that had made her his bride'.[1] Here, Hylla becomes the sources of spiritual healing and power, the agent through which Dominic finds his redemption. Like other heroines, this is accompanied by a certain physical change, although this is by no means an illness or a self-wounding like Elizabeth or Catherine. Instead, it is a refining of her beauty through her suffering and acceptance of the death of Dominic, which again is deliberately linked with the hare motif:

> One day in the Wilderness when she was picking wood-sorrel she found part of the skeleton of a hare. She held the smooth white collar-bone in her hand for a moment before letting it fall back again on to the damp leaf-mould.
>
> Her pale, thin face had now more than ever the stark beauty of a thing that has been stripped of all inessentials and is left bare. [2]

As the collar-bone has been stripped of its flesh to leave only the purity of the smooth white bone, the absolute refinement of the white hare, so too has Hylla's beauty been increased by its starkness. The association of this external beauty with an inner spiritual beauty is unmistakeable:

> Her grey eyes appeared to grow a shade darker as though the wild light that had shone in them that day when she leaped along the Barra cliffs, and one other time, had receded farther into her like a lamp that is carried into an adjoining room. [3]

1 The White Hare, p. 312.
2 The White Hare, p. 313.
3 The White Hare, p. 313-4.

At the same time it is intensified by its relation with the hare motif which integrates the characterisation of Hylla and deepens her spiritual associations. Through their mutual association with the hare motif the experiences of Hylla and Dominic are made interchangeable; their communal living thus takes place on a spiritual plane as well as a physical one and in a sense the fates of the two blend into one. Thus united, they represent a single expression of death and new life, of a physical annihilation which is both an expression of spiritual wholeness and leads to a higher plane of experience.

It is this sort of increased significance which is the most important development in Stuart's use of motif. The motifs themselves change little in their essentials but more meanings gather round them as his work progresses. Partly this is through an increased stylistic subtlety but largely it is the result of their increasing interrelationships, so that it becomes impossible not to view one use of motif in the context of other of its uses elsewhere. This is the case in the passage just quoted where Hylla finds the hare's collar-bone. She finds it in 'the Wilderness' where Dominic buried it; but because the hare has now become a symbol of regeneration and spiritual wholeness, the Wilderness can no longer be regarded as a place of desolation. Rather, its significance shifts to become a place which has a potential for growth although like the hare's body and Hylla herself it has been laid waste so that growth can take place. So, the bone is allowed to fall into 'the damp leaf-mould', like a seed being planted.[1] The hare motif thus links both desolation and fertility and propagates the passage between the two.

The use of the hare to express isolation and reintegration, and its ability to contain other motifs, are refined further in Redemption.

1 Compare this with Pigeon Irish, p. 140-1: 'seed had sprouted out of the damp warm earth, fertile after the flood'.

There, the motifs of disfigurement, woman as spiritual healer, living in a community and outsider have a common meeting point in Margareta, who is represented as a hare.

When she and Ezra meet he calls her 'little Hare'[1] an identification which she extends and associates with her changed sexual status by saying 'I can only crawl and hop. I'm not nice to sleep with now'.[2] This association, almost transference, from woman to mythological creature makes more convincing the identification of Margareta with the idea of a 'woman-Christ' which is implicit in Amos's identification of her with 'consummation and salvation',[3] 'a new life, a kind of resurrection'.[4] Because of the role played by the hare motif elsewhere in Stuart's novels, it also helps to integrate Margareta with other heroines and the motifs which meet in her, with their use elsewhere. It also allows Margateta to function as a character and not just as symbol, by on the one hand 'siphoning off' her mystical qualities and on the other hand insisting on that status for her. This in turn allows a greater realism, and a more internalised narrative style, rather than forcing the novel into a form which is heavily symbolic, increasingly distanced from realism and thus necessarily externalised.

Part of this hare identity is the sacred aspect of the motif of woman as a spiritual healer, with which Stuart is deeply concerned, so that even sexual relations are a part of, or a path to, spiritual experience. These qualities are present in Elizabeth, Catherine and in Margareta and both the associations and the development of the motif are interesting. Woman as a spiritual healer is associated with the idea of

1 Redemption, p. 172.
2 Redemption, p. 172.
3 Redemption, p. 172.
4 Redemption, p. 173.

a 'woman-Christ' most clearly in The Angel of Pity and The Flowering Cross. Sonia, the girl/angel, is resurrected as Christ was, as proof and expression of the eternal compassion which will heal the suffering which man undergoes:

> I began to see that in her resurrection there was something of which we had great need . . . It was the divine repairing and rebeautifying of the flesh, after all the ravages inflicted on it by the world . . . Her proud and serene spirit had not fled back to those shining heights in order to escape from this frail, ruined abode. But, as though that poor body was infinitely precious to it, it had taken it too. It had brought back with it to the blessed heights of heaven that wounded flesh as an eternal yet tangible memento of its great love. 1

The primacy of the spirit over the body is expressed by Sonia's angelic status and by her 'crucifixion', which is a violent multiple rape resulting in death. Sexual intercourse for its own sake is destructive here, rather than just inferior to physical love approached in a mystical spiritual sense. The motif extends further than that, however, since Sonia's spiritual power is a triumph over the mindless raping of her. As such, it is set against the terrible impersonality of the war which has destroyed the whole countryside, which is imaged as a huge machine by Catherine. The narrator tells her:

> No. She does not destroy the machine; she, too, is hurt and crushed by it because she chooses to be weak like us. But in reality she is so strong that the machine has no power over her at all . . . it is not really a terrible thing to be crushed by it, because it is possible to triumph over it after it has killed us. 2

This is the message of acceptance which Margareta gives to Aunt Nuala, that 'Death too is a good brute if you don't resist him . . . There's the going out, there's darkness and rotting in the grave, but there's

1 The Angel of Pity, p. 258-9.
2 The Angel of Pity, p. 205-6.

another side to it as there's another side to everything. The going-out side and the coming-in side'.[1] The Flowering Cross suggests a similar hope to be found in the acceptance of suffering, again through the mystic potential of women. After having escaped from a prisoner-of-war camp in Germany, the hero of the novel, Louis, was obliged by settlement restrictions to keep moving from station to station. As he did so he was accompanied by various girls, in the same predicament, who preferred this companionship to travelling alone. As a matter of course they shared bedding, but without intercourse: 'there was too much hunger, too much crowding, too many clothes'.[2] It is this non-sexual companionship which reveals to him the potential of women:

> He had learnt all sorts of things. He had been touched by the solace there is in women, not in any particular woman but in womanhood. Not in promiscuity, and not in the excitement of new bodies. No, neither in the old idealistic marriage nor in the old carnal promiscuity. This was something else, this drawing of a dirty blanket around himself and another and being folded away with her in her womanhood, out of the black nights, with train grinding under them and the smoke blowing in through the broken windows . . . It was their womanhood that was the solace, not what was particular. He was humble and abashed before the great gift of womanhood that had been cast down before him in the mire and dust. [3]

Again, there is a rejection of purely physical intercourse and again a rejection of 'idealistic marriage' as in Woman and God and Redemption. That the solace of woman is not mere companionship, though, is made clear by the poem which Louis writes to the woman who brings him comfort in prison, Alyse:

> Your body is the healing cross, the woman-cross
> Flowering and without nails,
> Planted in this bare corner.
> Ripen now, in darkness, in this night

1 Redemption, p. 244.
2 The Flowering Cross, p. 44.
3 The Flowering Cross, p. 44-5.

And bear the fruit, my darkling.[1]

The image is reminiscent of the woman and cross in the early poem 'Criminals' but is more complex. The woman is the cross itself, not the crucified, and thus takes on its symbolic value of suffering, redemption and Christ's mission. However, because suffering is a pre-requisite of understanding this nature of women, that is, because suffering takes place before the woman-cross is experienced, she is 'Flowering and without nails'. The experience of woman is a healing one, not the cross of pain but of a joy after pain; it is, therefore, a redemptive cross and the implication is that it is a separate, perhaps later experience than the suffering of crucifixion. It is distinct from Christ's cross and has an identity of its own since it is the healing cross, not a healing cross, while at the same time demanding identification with the more orthodox Christian symbol. Its redemptive power is emphasised by the motif of gardening, since it will ripen and bear fruit. It is, therefore, a symbol of the dynamism of redemption, its continual movement and being, as well as a powerful emblem of resurrection and life.

The way in which the relationship between woman and the cosmic force of redemption which she personifies through her healing ability is made and developed is interesting. In Woman and God it is the miracle which cures Elizabeth that seems to link her with spiritual forces; in The Angel of Pity, Sonia is actually an angel and this, with her re-enactment of Christ's Passion, makes her spiritually healing power obvious; in The Flowering Cross it is the complex metaphor of the title which provides the link between sacred and profane love, suggesting that

1 The Flowering Cross, p. 32. See also, Francis Stuart, 'The Prisoner II' We Have Kept the Faith: New and Selected Poems, p. 34: 'Your body is the healing cross,/Flowering, without nails.'

the outspread body of woman and her pubic hair has a spiritual meaning which transcends the obvious sexual promise of consummation and new life. Elswhere, though, it is the hare or 'hare-synecdoche' which performs this function, as it does for Margareta. This is the case in The White Hare, where it is used to develop the mystical and emotional relationship between Hylla and Dominic, as the pigeons are used in an even more symbolic way to parallel the relationship between Catherine and Frank in Pigeon Irish. In Julie the tortoise, Celestine, which is killed by rats when Julie leaves it in her tenement room is a complex metaphor of destroyed security and beauty as is indicated by the poem written to it:

> Beneath the broken shell the wounds are bared.
> What took so many years to grow and form
> Into minute perfection was not spared
> That ravenous violence. And I am not spared,
> Who can only watch . . . 1

Julie is identifiable with Celest since her skull was 'broken' as a child for a head operation which she feared would destroy her world and herself; through this she is connected with sacred woman since the tortoise is named after a nun, Sister Celestine, whom Julie loved and admired. The destruction of Celest suggests the possible destruction of Goldberg, also, and it is after the death of the tortoise that Julie's resolve not to let him remain in prison unvisited by her hardens. When she does visit him she brings him a comfort and hope which circumstances necessarily divorce from any sexual contact. It is not a redemption in the mystically spiritual terms of The Angel of Pity, though, but it is one well-suited to the terms of the novel and to Goldberg, since it is

1 Julie, p. 231; the poem is reprinted with the title 'Broken Tortoise' in Francis Stuart, 'Three Poems, Capuchin Annual 1945-6, p. 304.

an opportunity for him to continue the rackets and deals which give him his vitality, while still imprisoned, to have a continued life unlike the dead tortoise which symbolically links them both.

The link between healing woman and hare motif is sometimes made by allowing the two to blend into each other. This is done in The High Consistory where Claire and the ocelot are united by the 'flash of recognition'[1] that passes between them at the zoo, by their sexual congress, and by their vitality and vulnerability. The redemptive power of Claire is linked absolutely with the ocelot, who is her 'liberating angel'[2] as she becomes that of Grimes. Their spiritual power and outsidership is linked with that of other women in Grimes's picture of the Sisterhood which Claire epitomises, Ste. Thérèse, Katusha, Libertas, the girl in the Dublin asylum, and the ocelot, and which illustrates the relationship between sacred and profane love:

> The spirit of the Sisterhood I saw as embracing extreme experiences, religious, sexual, painful, and Claire would be the woman in whom the three were combined, my contribution to the classic allegory of 'Sacred and Profane Love'. 3

Here, Claire is absorbed into the hare motif, partly by her relationship to the ocelot but also by her association with other, fictional or dead, women. Her spiritual potency is expressed by this relationship with women who live in spirit only, while she inhabits both worlds. In a sense, then, the other members of the Sisterhood are acting as hare motifs, carrying its mythical and symbolic power.[4]

The extended use of the hare motif is especially refined, and thus

1 The High Consistory, p. 35.
2 The High Consistory, p. 56.
3 The High Consistory, p. 226.
4 See also the role of Emily Brontë in A Hole in the Head and the relationship between Lisette, who dies, in The Pillar of Cloud, and her sister Halka.

especially illuminating, in Memorial which contains Stuart's most elaborate use of it in recent work. Since this refinement depends in part on a similar refinement in other motifs which operate through it, it is necessary to examine them before attention can be focused on Memorial and the way in which the hare motif has been developed as the focus of other motifs.

The movement from wilderness to new life recurs in Stuart's novels. It may be a physical wilderness, on a small scale such as the wood in The White Hare, the garden in Angels of Providence or the overgrown cemetery in The Chariot, or on a large scale, such as the wartime settings of The Angel of Pity or The Pillar of Cloud. Almost always, though, the physical wilderness is matched by the desolate inner landscape of the central character. So, in The Angel of Pity the battlefield becomes a symbol of the alienation of the narrator and the angel from the societies at war: 'she and I in this waste of no-man's-land between two opposing civilisations neither of which we belonged to'[1], is the narrator's description of their situation. The narrator is on the battlefield 'in my quest for that eternal truth whose beauty haunted me as a child'[2], not for any conventional reason and in a sense this is the state of mind of all of Stuart's heroes. The motif of unusual mental states is closely linked to the motif of a wasteland, therefore, and they develop together. As the mental states increase in acuteness, from profound isolation in The Pillar of Cloud to actual insanity in A Hole in the Head so the wastelands become more interiorised, more specific to the hero. This tendency to localisation is clear in The Pillar of Cloud where 'the great desolation'[3] of war-time Germany quickly focuses down to the personal suffering and

1 The Angel of Pity, p. 35.
2 The Angel of Pity, p. 34.
3 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 12.

responses of a few people. In Redemption, too, the suffocatingly parochial setting to the town of Altamont gives way to that of a few rooms, in a flat, the rooms which, like the ark, contain the community from which life is regenerated. The desolate setting thus takes on a more intimate meaning for the hero, so that its wider implications are concentrated into his personal experiences. In Black List, Section H, for example, the significance of the Second World War is refined to its significance for H, which is both personal and also universal since it is universal truth that he seeks: it becomes 'the deep divide between the past and what was still to come' and the war's aftermath might bring 'a howl of final despair or . . . certain words that he didn't yet know how to listen for'[1] for H and for the countries that had participated in it.

The mental state of H at the end of the novel is also the final expression of his deliberate delinquency throughout the novel. His disregard for his family's material needs, his pursuit of extreme sensation and his continual gambling culminate in the risk he is taking in the prison cell, deliberately opening himself to a despair which is imaged as the 'howl' of madness and pain, or a higher, more complex but quite lucid 'words' that he does not even know how to identify. H has calculatedly pushed himself to the state where this choice is possible. In this deliberateness there are similarities to the narrator in Rimbaud's Une Saison en Enfer who says 'Je parvins à faire s'évanouir dans mons esprit toute l'espérance humaine';[2] to l'acte gratuit and the dependence on the truth of the apparently irrational of Surrealism; and also to the acceptance of what might be madness by the hero of Saul Bellow's Herzog, who pushes himself into the state where he can say 'If

1 Black List, Section H, p. 425.
2 'I was able to expel from my mind all human hope': Oeuvres Complètes, p. 93.

I am out of my mind, it's all right with me.'[1] Like these, the madness of Stuart's characters is a controlled one, undertaken to widen their perceptions. In A Hole in the Head Barnaby Shane is trapped by a sort of terrible spiritual sleep from which his only path of escape is self-violence. He shoots himself in the head with a small-calibre pistol, leaving a wound which does not heal until his psyche is healed, and which is compared to the practices of 'an Amazonian tribe that punctures the skulls of its children in the belief that the perforations give access to both good and evil spirits, thus widening the range of perception'.[2] His apparent insanity takes the form of his belief that he is accompanied by Emily Brontë, an illusion which seems to be produced by the hallucinogenic drugs he doses himself with. In this case the range of perception is very isolating indeed since no-one else can, of course, share his hallucination: when he visits friends and insists on an extra meal, theatre ticket and drink being purchased for Miss Brontë the effect is both amusing and isolating. The hallucination is, however, a kind of richness of perception. When he is cured, Shane leaves for the city of Belbury in the north of Ireland and its damaged buildings and ceaseless violence, into which he is drawn, are emphasised, made more acute, by the new, rational, prosaic frame of mind which he now occupies. Here again, though, the wasteland setting is quickly limited to a smaller, more personal arena. Shane finds himself occupying a besieged house in which ruthless members of a paramilitary organisation are holding a hostage. Against this intimate version of the destruction in the surrounding city the only possible source of hope or vitality is the vision which was earlier considered to be insane. This is reasserted by one of the hostages, an old, bed-ridden almost deaf woman whom Shane had visited in his earlier state, who says to him

1 Herzog, p. 1.
2 A Hole in the Head, p. 215.

'I forgot to ask how the young lady is'.[1] Here, as in the other novels, the frame of mind which is apparently a form of madness, or at best irresponsibility, is found to be a necessary prerequisite of the healing process, which produces a new set of perceptions in the hero.

The healing process is extended to the community that undergoes the redemptive process, too, as in Redemption. There, the fact that Margareta is crippled is initially the main reason that Ezra joins the small community with her, since 'it would be simpler for her as a cripple than living in a hotel'.[1] Having become part of it, however, he realises quickly that it too possess some of the healing power which he has found in Margareta; he believes that through it it might be possible for him to live again with his estranged wife, Nancy:

> He thought he saw at last a solution to the problem of his marriage. And it was not, as he had known for long now, to go back and submit to all the outward trappings of marriage, to being husband and wife in a house together, preying on and slowly destroying each other. But in a small community, not held tightly together, without bonds and rights and duties, then if there was still that heart-power in them, something by which they could touch and move each other, it would have a chance. [3]

Nancy is unable to comprehend Ezra's idea, however; like Anne in Women and God she is cut off from the world by her own self-absorption which it is difficult to penetrate; she listens 'with a kind of absent-mindedness as though his words never really reached her, as though she heard them behind a veil of cigarette smoke'.[4] Her lack of understanding increases by contrast Margareta's sympathy, and the opposition between marital home and small community emphasises that difference. Marriage is shown as a mutual immolation, a terrible destruction of each other through making demands which have no greater

1 A Hole in the Head, p. 215.
2 Redemption, p. 180.
3 Redemption, p. 180-1.
4 Redemption, p. 201.

basis than the obligation of the legal status of marriage. The freedom of the community, however, allows choice of action, so that when anything is done for another it is done voluntarily and from a genuine sense of loving, which is part of the redemptive experience. The sense of encapsulation in these communities links them with the motif of the ark, even when it is not specifically invoked. In Redemption, the flat is a retreat from Flood's Hotel, where the main action takes place, and it is also above a fish-shop, both circumstances implying a nearly-literal ark-equivalent. Elsewhere, it is implied through a sense of security, fellowship, isolation from the rest of the world, shared faith, and close communal dwelling, or by other references; in The Pillar of Cloud, for instance, Dominic cuts wood for their room and Halka says 'let the winter be long and dark'[1] while the roof of Simeon Grimes's room in The High Consistory is lit by a single skylight, like Noah's ark.[2]

New life springs from these communities or is, at least, predicated by them. The motif of creating a garden in the wilderness is the most literal expression of this. It occurs most clearly in Glory, where the communality of Frank de Lacy and Mairead exists in their shared death; in Angels of Providence, where the relationship between Samuel and Mrs Morgan develops as they make a garden in the tangle of undergrowth surrounding the house; and in The Chariot, where the overgrown corner of the cemetery which Amos clears and claims as a burial plot for himself, Lena and the old lady represents the eternality of their shared life. It is used, too, as an image of the redemption of Alyse who, in The Flowering Cross, 'felt like a field that had been rained on and ploughed

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 231; see also The Chariot, p. 214-5.
2 See Genesis 6. 16. In The High Consistory, p. 317 the narrator also draws a parallel between the room and 'Van Gogh's tiny final studio at Auvers', thus extending the sense of communality.

up and rained on again and lies at last dark and open'.[1] The sense of a background of suffering and communality of Alyse and Louis is expressed in that novel by the sharing of food, made more piquant by their acceptance of the experiences which have led to that moment:

> How sweet their bread and butter and cocoa tasted when they ate it together in a tranquillity that gave them time to remember all the other supperless evenings, or evenings of dry bread! They had learnt the secret of not trying to put the past away from them and revelling obliviously in their present happiness. The past was there, and against its sombre background they never lost the sense of wonder at their present bliss. [2]

The sharing of meals as a sign of like-mindedness recurs in Stuart's work[3] and is especially important in The High Consistory. There, the dish bifteck tartare which had been used as a symbol of H's independence in Black List, Section H[4] becomes a symbol of Grimes's lost youth, when it is refused by Nicole, who tells him 'I'm on a strict diet; oysters, brown bread and butter is all I want'.[5] The oyster, though, has a special significance, as an aphrodisiac - 'Eat Oysters, Love Longer'[6] is the putative title of one of Grimes's paintings - and as a symbol of the island of Inisheask, famous for its oysters, where the community of Grimes, Claire, Julio, Robert Banim and Pacella gathers. The Inisheask oyster has an added significance, too, which a fisherman finds in a painting by Grimes:

> he went on talking to me and she translated what he said. - You have assembled in your God-given painting people from foreign parts, historical and holy figures, as well as a couple of your . . . she broke off, and went on quickly: and one of those spotted beasts that ladies of high degree liked to have accompany them in those days, all

1 The Flowering Cross, p. 216-7.
2 The Flowering Cross, p. 212.
3 See The White Hare, p. 59-61; Redemption, p. 223.
4 Black List, Section H, p. 66-7.
5 The High Consistory, p. 300.
6 The High Consistory, p. 225.

come together to partake of the Inisheask oyster, once famous in the courts of Europe, and in doing so you have enshrined in a piece of lasting art the secret of our island felicity, now all but forgotten.

He went on to talk of the former breed of molluscs with more than just a crude aphrodisiac effect on those that swallowed them, but one pleasurably diffused through body and spirit, rather than concentrated on the genitalia as is that ascribed to the common variety. [1]

Because it is 'God given', 'secret', and concerned with spiritual fertility, the oyster becomes almost eucharistic here, operating not only as a symbol of a new mystical life but also as an agent in its procreation. There is a similar feeling in The Pillar of Cloud where, at the start of the novel, Dominic dreads the thought of returning home to 'a meagre supper of three slices of dry bread'[2] but where, at the end, his new spiritual life is expressed in 'slicing the bread'.[3] Again, the food has a eucharistic significance which is linked here with dryness as a symbol of the lack of redemption. Hunger and thirst, therefore, are used as motifs of spiritual need as well as physical suffering. In Black List, Section H, for example, H deliberately induces a hangover thirst to enter into touch 'with entities in his subconscious and in the past':[4]

> Thirst! That was something his father had plumbed the detailed and

1 The High Consistory, p. 283-4.
2 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 7.
3 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 232.
4 Black List, Section H, p. 178. The figuring of spiritual aridity by physical thirst is traditional: see, for example, T. S. Eliot, The Waste Land; William Morris, The Well at the World's End; W. B. Yeats, At the Hawk's Well. Stuart's use of it here, though, as a symbol of potential redemption, a thirst that will be slaked, rather than just as spiritual deadness, is closer to that of Julian of Norwich's description of Christ's spiritual thirst in Revelations of Divine Love, p. 63-4:

> For this is the Spiritual Thirst of Christ: the love-longing that lasteth, and ever shall, till that we see that sight on Doomsday . . . the same desire and thirst that He had upon the Cross . . . the same hath he yet and shall [have] unto the time that the last soul that shall be saved is come up to His bliss.

See also other works by Stuart: Memorial, p. 91-2; A Hole in the Head, p. 213.

normally unimaginable recesses of. So had Lane, unable to swallow more than a few drops. H had been present without being capable of sharing in his agony. Now he could do so. And Christ on the Cross had suffered more from thirst than anything else, at one phase of the three hours. 1

It is these 'entities' whose thirst H fantasises about assuaging with his 'machine out of which, like Moses with Aaron's rod, he could cause a sparkling stream to flow'[2] in an action which is both spiritually as well as physically refreshing.

* * * * * * *

It is not just the taking of food or drink that is important, therefore, but what that represents in spiritual terms. It becomes an act of loving, of sharing both pain and pleasure, which Stuart extends to other actions as well. In Redemption, for example, the same qualities are present in the tender care with which Amos washes and dresses Margareta[3] and she in her turn massages and comforts Aunt Nuala.[4] Human compassion and acts of caring are a part of greater, divine love, in The Angel of Pity, where the care and labour spent by an unknown soldier on making a doll's house is finally justified by the comfort it gives to a little girl. Compassion is not possible without suffering, and the two are, therefore, complementary parts of the overall cosmic force:

I saw now more and more clearly that nothing is wasted, nothing is without purpose in the destiny of man. From battles in which hundreds of thousands are killed right down to the fashioning of a nest or a doll's house, all is made to serve the mysterious purpose of infinite love.

That love is both amazingly tender and amazingly terrible in its outpouring. And man is caught in those two arms, between, as it were, a fiery arm that sears and burns him and a white, frail, bruised arm that caresses him with profound pity and gentleness . . . For the heart that

1 Black List, Section H, p. 179.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 423. The sexual significance of 'Aaron's rod' is used more explicitly in Memorial, p. 228.
3 Redemption, p. 218-9.
4 Redemption, p. 240-1, 243-4.

has not been wounded seems incapable of feeling the gentle and compassionate caress. [1]

These acts expressive of communality, whether making a garden, eating, or other acts, form a vital link between the spiritual and the mundane, and, as the passage above suggests, link them with the universal quality of redemption. Communality, then, and expressions of it, are also expressions of the redemptive state of mind, just as isolating states of mind lead to redemptive experience. The same is true of the motifs of gambling and of mechanisation. The horse-racing motif is used consistently as an expression of risk-taking which is both spiritual and physical. In Black List, Section H, of course, it is part of the 'training' which H subjects himself to broaden the perceptions; elsewhere, it represents the willingness to embrace suffering through loss and in a profound sense, shows the ability to appreciate beauty without wishing to possess it, and a stamina to endure feelings which are so focused and so intense that they verge on a kind of insanity. The spiritual potential of racing is emphasised by contrast with the businessman's attitude to it. In Things To Live For, the narrator realises that he has regarded a successful bet as a profitable transaction over which he is elated, that the desire to win money is controlling him, therefore, and forces himself to give it away.[2] In the same novel there is a stark contrast between the vitality and care with which the narrator writes a description of an exciting race and the shortened, empty version published by a newspaper. Rather differently, but illustrating the same point, in the short story entitled 'Jacob'

1 The Angel of Pity, p. 284.
2 Things To Live For, p. 157-8. Compare this with Anthony Burgess, Earthly Powers (London, 1980), p. 541-7, in which a Cardinal, Carlo, deliberately continues to gamble until he has lost all of his winnings in a gesture which marks his rejection of the physical world for submersion in the spiritual one.

there is a sharp contrast between Jacob's certainty that his horse has won in what appeared to be a photo-finish and his businessman-friend's anxiety and uncertainty. Where racing is associated with business it is subject to the same sterile anxieties and successes as the business world; where it is treated as an aesthetic or spiritual exercise, however, it cannot be attended with anything but success, since both to win and to lose bring measures of insight.

Distaste for a new materialistic civilisation occurs in The Great Squire as it does in Pigeon Irish, although it is the new British ascendancy that the Great Squire opposes. Racing is the central metaphor for the friction between them: in a remarkably tense and amusing piece of writing a race between an Irish pig and an English racehorse is described, with the pig the victor. The victory is a temporary one, however, for the same spirit which caused the Squire to oppose the British leads him to sacrifice his own life to save that of his brother. Again, there are the complementary qualities of worldly and spiritual risk-taking, in deliberate acts of defiance to those forces which are sterile and deadening.

Such defiance can be represented by mechanisation, of course. The aeroplane in Pigeon Irish is an ambiguous symbol because of the novel's wartime setting. At first it seems to be a symbol of individual freedom and excitement both in its own right[1] and because it is the airforce, initially, which rebels against Headquarters and holds out against the new civilisation. This is possible only by the the tyrannical use of their power, however, by bombing the Telephone Centre and threatening to bomb Headquarters; the ambiguity is compounded since aggression is,

1 For example, Pigeon Irish, p. 12: 'By god, it was great all right. . . knowing all the time you had the air plane doing everything you wanted with the slight pressure of one hand. Sensitive, and yet fierce with the roar of the engine and the wild rush of unfelt wind.'

after all, a likely function of military aircraft.[1] Finally, it is necessary for Stuart to shift from the real aircraft to its symbolic equivalent in the novel, the pigeon, as an unequivocal symbol of soaring spiritual flight and endangered liberty. The aeroplane called 'The Spirit' in Try the Sky, which is identified with Noah's Ark both physically and spiritually, is 'the product, not of calculation but of inspiration'[2] and its maker believes it is an expression of a mystical experience which he believes to be inseparable from scientific advance:

> It is all bound up, ultimately. Of that I am sufficiently convinced. First the Kingdom of Heaven must be sought and then everything will be added. But one must be bold. One must venture everything, be ready to sacrifice everything, if those heights are to be reached. 3

This sense of risking everything is equally present in the ecstatic celebration of the aeroplanes's potential in Glory. There, though, the aeroplane is seen initially as an agent of spiritual destruction: the world is 'going to become more and more self-complacent, more and more standardised, more and more benevolent on a large material scale. But cold and ruthless to those who outrage its conventions. To those who threaten its order and organisation. And it will be ruled by a Company'.[4] The Company, Trans-Continental Aero-routes, eventually tries and executes Mairead O'Byrne who has used her position with it to try to

1 Written in 1932 the novel pre-dates the air raids on Madrid and Guernica which showed how appallingly the destructive potential of aircraft could be realised; Stuart's use of the motif is ambiguous rather than naive, therefore. It is pointed out interestingly by Bernard Bergonzi, Reading the Thirties (London, 1978) p. 91-107 that it was not until rather later in the decade that other contemporary writers began to turn from the essentially Futurist idea of the aircraft as representing 'modernity combined with poised, calm control' (p. 91) to expressing its equivocal nature. He suggests Graham Green's England Made Me (1935) as marking the change in orientation.

2 Try the Sky, p. 204.

3 Try the Sky, p. 198.

4 Glory, p. 140-1.

destroy its control and to release the potential for beauty in the aircraft. This involves a world-war and terrific destruction, but the destruction is regarded as better than complacent, sterile living and as an almost saintly madness:

> There were two madnesses, the conqueror's and the saint's. They should have died with the past, with all the discarded outworn glamour of the past. But they had not died . . . And the drab world would look up from its money-making, shocked and startled, and hear of them again. 1

The destructive potential of the aircraft is turned round here into a cleansing destruction, so that a parallel can be made between it and the suffering which lies at the base of compassion. The aircraft motif is not only linked with glamour and vitality, however, but also with the idea of being outcast and through that finding redemption. At the trial Frank tells their accusers 'I tell you God has called the outcasts, the gamblers, the harlots, the brigands before you'.[2] The aircraft is an equivocal symbol, however, and in spite of the insistence that the destruction is a destruction of complacency it is difficult to accept this in any but symbolic terms. To view it in any other way is to submerge its primitive ecstasy in a knowledge of the terrible loss of human life which such a war would involve. It is this highly symbolic quality, though, which makes the novel acceptable and the motif of the aeroplane convincing: as Hamish Miles in The New Statesman put it:

> the story is convincing, because it moves with a logic that cuts under the surface of life, down into the deep layers of the spirit, an almost mystical drama, set forth by characters who move in a clean, pure air with the steady freedom of the aeroplane which strip them of mundane bonds and yet, in the end, conquer them. . . . he has learned to dispense with all but the essentials in his almost symbolic stories. 3

1 Glory, p. 177.
2 Glory, p. 283.
3 Hamish Miles, review of Glory, The New Statesman and Nation, New Series, 6, no. 132 (September 1933), p. 268.

The aeroplane is used nearly always as a symbol of hope and a new, enlightening spirit. In Search of Love uses it in this sense in a very lighthearted way;[1] in Black List, Section H, though, it is used specifically as an emblem of redemption since a Russian plane high above Berlin is 'a tiny silver cross horizontal against the pale sky';[2] and the aeroplane crash in The High Consistory is the catalyst which induces the enlightenment of Simeon Grimes by injuring him and deranging his papers so that he is forced to reconsider the bases on which he has always acted.[3] From being a general expression of the purity and vitality of mechanisation in his earlier work the aeroplane takes on a more personal significance in the later novels at the same time as it is more distanced from the central characters. In Black List, Section H, A Hole in the Head, and The High Consistory the central character is either just an observer of the plane or one of many passengers on it, not the pilots or exclusive guests of the earlier novels. As the distance between character and aircraft grows, though, paradoxically their significance increases: the aircraft is allowed to become a more universal motif and the loss of the physical intimacy between them allows a greater spiritual intimacy. It is this need for spiritual intimacy which lies at the heart of Stuart's use of motifs of mechanisation. Where it exists, the motif is a lifegiving force but where it is absent it is totally sterile and destructive. In this destructive form it is often linked to the motif of business: for example, the battery hen production of Mr Lecky in Good Friday's

1 In Search of Love, p. 225-9.

2 Black List, Section H, p. 370; see also Victors and Vanquished, p. 201. In both cases the motif has added force from its association with Russia, which often represents a similar sense of new life and hope in Stuart's work.

3 The High Consistory, p. 7-8; see also Good Friday's Daughter, p. 7-9 where the aircraft is the catalyst between Mark's literary ambitions in England and his other life in Ireland; and A Hole in the Head p. 11-12 where the flight is a similar movement from one part of Shane's life to another.

Daughter exists just to make money and thus has 'a final sterility'[1] which symbolises, too, the spiritual sterility of the 'highly-cultured women'[2] of local society. Bacteriological warfare is the expression of destructive mechanisation is The Flowering Cross. According to Polensky, 'just wait till science really gets going and blood won't be spilt but polluted with germs, and then you'll see that tenderness itself has been banished and the only solace will be in hatred'.[3]

Polensky is speaking of the physical comfort of women, but the spiritual comfort of religion is also destroyed by the pollution of business attitudes, a submergence of God in mammon. In The Pillar of Cloud Dominic believes:

> There can be no speaking of what is holy except in words that are holy. That is why the sermons that he sometimes heard in the Cathedral were meaningless. The priests spoke of God, but their words were the words of those submerged in the world. He had often thought to himself: Substitute for the words "God" or "Jesus Christ" in their sermons, the words "Fatherland" or "social justice" or even "a successful trading year," and you might be listening to a politician or a company director at a board meeting. [4]

This idea of a completely materialistic Church is taken to its logical, ominous conclusion in The High Consistory. In Robert Banim's fantastic story a Cosmic Director tells a meeting of Shareholders 'We have secured the concession to formulate divine law'.[5] Here, the world of business is not just opposed to the spiritual world but has complete ascendancy over it, eradicating any possibility of risk-taking or the dangerous insights

1 Good Friday's Daughter, p. 184.
2 Good Friday's Daughter, p. 184.
3 The Flowering Cross, p. 45; In A Hole in the Head, p. 89 a later refinement of this is the 'Bugaboo', an imaginary super-weapon which destroys nervous and mental vigour by attacking the power of imagination: 'All over the globe a tiny, invisible fungus is annulling the nucleic acids which, as we know, are the base of imagination'.
4 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 161-2.
5 The High Consistory, p. 155. See also the reduction of the Pope to a tame canary by a politician in A Hole in the Head, p. 89.

which can lead to the state of redemption. Ultimately, though, all depends on the personal response of the individual, whether he allows himself to be controlled by those moral codes which belong to the impersonal, mechanical business world or whether he pursues a deeper vision. As Ezra puts it in Redemption:

> Let the heart only open wide enough and all is given to it. There are two ways to go down a street of the big city at night . . . There is the way of the shut heart, gone into a glass core reflecting everything - a little machine reflecting, registering, an exact instrument of precision like a camera, a cylinder, a vacuum-cleaner and all other small machines, carried out in highly polished glass. Then all is reflected in a blind precision, faces, stone, paper, gestures, grimaces. And there is the other way, with the heart open, dark and expanded and reflecting nothing. Being touched by what the street is and what is in it, the night in the street and the street in the night. 1

The example which Ezra uses to illustrate his idea is the motif which recurs most consistently in Stuart's work: woman as a spiritual healer. The person who lives with 'the heart open', he says, will be aware of a potential in women which the person with 'the shut heart' will not see. To the former the simple sensual aspect of women is expanded into a realisation of their mystic, overwhelming beauty which transcends its simple physical identity:

> Girls in the street are not flesh . . . Or is it flesh and something else at the same time . . . As it is written in the song of songs: 'Thy neck is like the Tower of David builded for an armoury . . . Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies . . .' On that evening I saw the roes and the lilies and the towers of David, there in the street, in the evening. 2

Later in the novel, Margareta is the realisation of these spiritual potentials of women. She is 'flesh and something else at the same

1 Redemption, p. 8-9.
2 Redemption, p. 9.

time',[1] her sexuality transfigured into spiritual power. To Ezra, she is 'a warm, salty tasting well of life',[2] 'consummation and salvation',[3] bringing 'a new life, a kind of resurrection'.[4] Her spiritual potential is emphasised by her disfigurement. In common with other examples of this motif of disfigurement, her crippling is a mark of distinction, of an increased spiritual strength; however, it must be emphasised that this crippling has not made her sexually neutral: the man who helped Margareta to leave hospital to find Ezra did so at the price of intercourse with her. There is a sense of being set apart, therefore, but not of sterility, just as in Women and God Elizabeth's sexuality was set apart by her decision to enter a convent after the relationship with Frank had shown her potency.

It is for this reason that 'girls in the street are not flesh'; Stuart is using an essentially traditional motif here, that of the Magdalen,[5] in a highly personal way, as elsewhere he reinterprets the motif of thirst to emphasise its potential for redemption. The importance of the Magdalen to him is her lack of prohibition on genital sex and the sense of uninhibited communion which that can give, whether or not intercourse actually takes place. That is one potential half of the redemptive equation; the other is that her partner must have had the necessary experience of suffering to make him apt to receive the healing and the spiritual revelation which woman possesses. Paradoxically, there is no need for actual intercourse under those conditions, and if it does take place it is an expression of mutual redemption and joy, rather than simply the means to it. Amos and Margareta can no longer

1 Redemption, p. 9.
2 Redemption, p. 172.
3 Redemption, p. 172.
4 Redemption, p. 172.
5 For example, see Martha in Charles Dickens, David Copperfield; Maggie in Stephen Crane, Maggie: A Girl of the Streets; and the whores in John Steinbeck, Cannery Row.

easily have intercourse but their contiguity, their willingness to meet in this physical way if it were possible, is sufficient.[1] Intercourse can be liberating: it is so for Sugrue and Herra in Memorial, for example. However, if one partner is not in spiritual sympathy with the other, then it is hopeless at best, destructive at worst, as it is for Iseult and H,[2] Major Magnus, in The Chariot, is a violently menacing force to Lena, who fears him, and her lack of nurturing sexual experience is expressed in physical terms by venereal disease, from which she only becomes free when she is living in the small harmonious community with Amos and her mother.[3] Stuart cannot be accused of a male chauvinistic attitude in this use of the Magdalen motif, therefore, for the conditions of sexual harmony and its benefits are equal for both partners, the one offering the potential for the spiritual advancement of the other, so that both may find the redemptive state.

Sexuality, then, has a greater potency than just a physical one, and here the motif is clearly reiterating the theme of sacred and sensual love. Margareta has the power to heal the spiritual void, the inner darkness that has haunted Ezra since his return from Berlin. Equally, she is able to bring bodily comfort to Aunt Nuala by massaging her with a gentleness no-one else has, and at the same time she can help the frail, elderly but aggressive old lady accept the thought of death as no-one else has been able.[4] The 'woman-Christ' element in woman as a

1 The same is true of Louis and Alyse when they are separated in prison in The Flowering Cross, p. 28 where 'They were both beside themselves with pain and desire . . . The secret of these they had a glimpse of as neither, in their quite different ways, could ever have had before'.

2 See Black List, Section H, p. 26, 'Iseult's passivity in the face of his unhappy fumblings, prevented him' and p. 296, 'the constant nervous abrasion that he and Iseult inflicted on each other'. The insights H gets from the period spent in Paris with the two prostitutes are limited, too, because they do not have any real sympathy between them.

3 The Chariot, p. 220.

4 Redemption, p. 240-1.

spiritual healer can also be a 'woman-hare' too, then, like Margareta in Redemption. This link is made more powerfully and complexly in Memorial, however, where the hare motif is again the dominant one in the novel and where its association with other motifs which is often only implied elsewhere, is again made explicit. As the litany quoted earlier indicates, the heroine of the novel is intimately connected with the hare, even more so than Margareta. The name itself - Herra - suggests this, as well as her obsessive reading of newspaper accounts of hare coursing, her attempts to rear a hare, and, perhaps most touchingly, her sudden, cruel death like one of the animals she was concerned to save. Through this comes the integration of Herra with all the other motifs in Stuart's work. First, she is the woman-hare, woman-Christ; when the hare is ill, Sugrue realises that 'you'd unconsciously fallen into the pose of the hare'[1] and a little later says 'When I'd seen the hunched-up doe with head dropped sideways I'd thought (but, I'm sure, a few seconds after you) of pictures of Jesus on the cross with his chin against his chest'.[2] Not only is Herra like Christ an outsider and a sufferer but the Christ image is linked with physical fruition as well as spiritual refreshment since the hare is a doe which has just given birth. The woman-hare-Christ motif is also used to mark off the sensitivity of the outcast from the sterile destructivity of respectable society. When Herra draws a parallel between drugs and coursing, Sugrue expands:

> She means that everything that breathes is wonderful and those whose only pleasure in these creatures is using them in a sport that involves their terror and death reminds her of the bored citizens who went out of town of a Friday afternoon to get a thrill from watching Jesus on his cross. [3]

1 Memorial, p. 199.
2 Memorial, p. 207.
3 Memorial, p. 174.

The crucifixion image recurs; the leveret which Herra and Sugrue try to save being compared to the Christ-child, while its almost immediate killing by cats is compared to Christ's death:

> The priest was commemorating a calamity. The obscurity in which it had taken place had been part of its pain. The Victim had been defenceless and almost friendless. Now, through centuries of over-exposure, the tragedy had been formalised and diluted. And I saw that it could only haunt me again, as it had once, by association with the utterly obscure and unpublicisable one known to nobody but you or me.
>
> It started with tender nativity . . . A small, nose-twitching, speckled Babe needing sleep and warmth. That is why we had left the box-manger in the sitting-room, covered in wire-netting and pushed under the bottom shelf of the book-case.
>
> As the priest elevated the Chalice I saw the drops, no more than two, on the threadbare bit of carpet. 1

Here, the hare motif revitalises the Christian idea of death and salvation by making it intensely personal. The sense of isolation and suffering is communicated by references to obscurity, pain, defencelessness and friendlessness while the movement from that to reintegration is implicit in the blood which is a symbol of universal redemption. By switching from Christ to hare the deeply personal tragedy takes on a universal quality and both combine in the archetypal figure of the victim. As the priest celebrates Mass, therefore, the wine which provides the symbolic link between the mundane and the spiritual becomes, quite literally for Sugrue, the blood of the leveret and of Christ, the motif extending the symbol's meaning to an immediate physical presence.

This vital, immediate relevance of the Christ-hare motif means that it can be linked with other contemporary events by Stuart. The Hall of Fraternity in the Laggan which Herra and Sugrue help Mullen to open is seen by Herra not in political terms but as an attempt to bring some sort of peace and understanding which might be a step towards stopping

1 Memorial, p. 20-1.

man's inhumanity to animals and to his own kind. In an impassioned speech she says:

> But what happens here to-night and to-morrow is part of what happened somewhere else a long time ago. If we think it isn't, that's part of the separation and isolation of everything that we've invented. It means that Christ didn't rise after all, that his body rotted in a ditch or was eaten by dogs like the hares. God sent him to speak to us and that's what was done to him, so perhaps God tried again and sent the weakest, most innocent creatures to speak in an even simpler language. 1

To Sugrue's mind, the community in the Laggan also suggests Ismailia, where rose-gardens were made in the desert; it also suggests to him the song 'Roses are blooming in Picardy', written he believes, 'to celebrate the return of peace to a ravaged corner of the earth'.[2] The preoccupation with death and rebirth is constant throughout the novel and is intimately linked with this garden motif. It connects the garden at Sugrue's house where the hares were buried with the Garden of Gethsemane, at once a place of mourning since it held Christ's tomb and of joy since it was the place of his resurrection.[3] In turn, this is connected with the water-garden Herra makes, which becomes an image of Eden,[4] a refuge of safety and in its turn an image of Herra's innocence and sexual potential. The nightdress she wears is 'a regular kitchen garden . . . with the foliage so thick there's no getting at the fruit

1 Memorial, p. 74. Compare this with Father Zossima's discourse in Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, translated by C. Garnett (London, 1912), p. 332:
'Love all of God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things . . . and you will come at last to love the whole world with an all embracing love. Love the animals: God has given them the rudiments of thought and joy untroubled . . . Man, do not pride yourself on superiority to the animals: they are without sin, and you, with your greatness, defile the earth by your appearance on it . . .'

2 Memorial, p. 209.

3 Memorial, p. 238.

4 Memorial, p. 63.

and vegetables'[1] Sugrue comments amusedly, while Herra herself has 'long, pale legs like the stalks of some early garden delicacy just pulled from the earth'[2]: it is left to Herra to extend the metaphor by calling Sugrue's fingers and penis, slugs and snails,[3] and commenting 'they creep underneath'.[4]

Hares are an essential part of the communal living in the novel. The doe gives birth in the Laggan community, and it is the hares from that birth that Sugrue takes back with him to his house after Herra is dead. They are a constant reminder of her and in this context operate as a sort of material representative of the spiritual resurrection of Herra. The hares also occupy the same small flat, or 'ark', as Sugrue and Herra occupied, and become archetypes of the animals who seek security in Noah's ark, with Sugrue acting as Noah. Because of this hare-ark relationship, and because the two motifs represent vulnerability and shelter all those in need of protection become identified with the hares; so, the girl with the shaven head, punished for going with a British soldier, takes refuge on Peter's trawler, which is itself identified with the ark[5] and Liz, at the end of the novel, pleads for compassion for her isolation by saying 'if you could have made a hutch big enough and let me creep into it and stay in the room with you like the hares.'[6]

An important function of the hare motif is to integrate and extend other motifs in this way, and a part of this is the way in which it allows a multiplicity of identifications. It links Herra with the redemptive power of Christ, but because the link is made through a

1 Memorial, p. 88.
2 Memorial, p. 79; see also p. 147: 'What a lot of leaves before you come to the heart of the cauliflower.'
3 Memorial, p. 89, 228.
4 Memorial, p. 89.
5 Memorial, p. 184.
6 Memorial, p. 260.

second party it is relative rather than absolute and leaves her free to be identified with others too. So, Herra is linked also with Mary Magdalene and the theme of sacred and profane love which Herra and Sugrue develop around her. This withdrawal into complexity so that she becomes lover of Christ as well as Christ himself (rather like the image of the flowering cross) is emphasised by the wounds on her wrists, which are a sort of stigmata, a representation of Christ's wounds without being the wounds themselves. Her disfigurement has sexual as well as spiritual significance, since Sugrue talks of 'the even more vulnerable and ancient wound, the one that opened in flesh long, long ago before human mouths were dreamed of'[1] and since part of her anxiety is about her own sexual attractiveness.[2] So, it is a sign of potential physical fruitfulness as well a clear mark of affinity with Christ and thus with spiritual power. This is important since it illuminates other forms of disfigurement suffered by Stuart's heroines and shows that they, too, may be considered as symbolic of Christ's wounding, both as a mark of rejection by society and of triumph over physical suffering. This is especially clear in the case of Herra and of Halka, since the whip marks on the latter may be taken to parallel the scourging of Christ; it is no less true of Elizabeth, Catherine, Julie, Margaretta, Chaton in The Pilgrimage, Alyse in The Flowering Cross, Lena in The Chariot, and those others of Stuart's heroines who are marked off from the normal world by a physical or psychic abnormality. Disfigurement indicates a changed relationship between sexual and spiritual love, the predominance of the latter over the former in a way which transforms both into a combined

1 Memorial, p. 83-4. This idea of the link between sexuality and stigmata may be compared with that of Egon Schiele in his painting Weiblicher Akt mit gelbem Umhang (1914), Egon Schiele 1890-1918, Fischer Fine Art, The Third London Exhibition, November-December 1972, cat. no. 51; Haus der Kunst, München, 22 February-11May 1975, cat. no. 218.

2 Memorial, p. 87-9.

celebration of body and soul, which leads to the redemptive experience implicit in woman's role as spiritual healer.

The overall function of motif in Stuart's work is to integrate theme, characterisation, setting and plot, to act as an interface between reality and imagination, to incorporate private and public myth into naturalistic settings. A major device in this is his use of the hare as an integrator of other motifs, utilising its mythical associations with the ark, with resurrection and with erratic behaviour and its traditional quality of being able to represent either sex. The hare provides a link between motifs of isolation and of integration and channels them into the mainstream of his thought, the idea of redemption through suffering. The two states are indivisible, finally; the outcast, delinquency and insanity provide the varieties of pain which seeks refuge and comfort in communal living, in 'arks', and in motifs of healing and new life such as making a garden. Of all sources of spiritual power, however, none is so powerful as that of woman; and whether suffering is self-inflicted through gambling or an unavoidable part of the hero's existence, the path to redemption begins with a right understanding of the life-potential of what Sugrue calls 'the phoenix nest'[1] and H refers to as 'the couple of loose, stretchable stitches' in 'the tightly knit fabric of the material world'.[2]

1 Memorial, p. 147.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 220.

CHAPTER 5: BIOGRAPHY

The relationship between Stuart's life and his art has an important part to play in an understanding of his work. His deliberate exploitation of autobiographical form is apparent, for example, both in the subtitling of Things To Live For as 'Notes for an Autobiography' and in his description of Black List, Section H as 'an imaginative fiction in which only real people appear and under their actual names where possible'. Thus, the complexity of Stuart's work depends in part on an exploitation of the complex nature of autobiography itself and the ways in which it can be incorporated into fiction. Unfortunately, recognition of this has tended to push critical writing on Stuart down an almost exclusively autobiographical road. In the case of the Festschrift produced to celebrate Stuart's seventieth birthday, this is acceptable, since by its nature it is a personal gift to the man which might be expected to concentrate on him. In other cases, however, this approach has been used too simplistically and at the expense of other forms of investigation. J. H. Natterstad's little volume in the Bucknell University Press Irish Writers series, for example, and many reviews and articles written in the last forty years, make direct equations between Stuart's fiction and his life.[1] One limitation produced by that approach is a refusal to consider Stuart's novels on

1 See, for example, Francis Stuart, p. 56: 'in Black List, Section H Stuart remembers how his conception of Hitler began to change as a result of his lecture tour in Germany: "H was revising his original surmise about him . . ."' H. T. Moore, 'Postscript', in the American edition of Francis Stuart, Black List, Section H (Carbondale, 1971), 427-42 (p. 436) says 'most [of Francis Stuart's work] is closely autobiographical'. W. C. Barnwell, 'Looking to the Future: the Universality of Francis Stuart', Eire-Ireland, 12, no. 2 (Summer, 1977), 113-25 (p.115) states 'For Stuart, fiction is an extension of autobiography'. Certain events in Stuart's life are used as background: imprisonment by the Free State, a period spent in Germany in the Second World War, and imprisonment by the Free French - but no authoritative biography of Stuart has been written.

their own terms, without reducing them to a palimpsest of his life. Further, such an approach distorts and diminishes what should be a fruitful area of insight, especially in the case of Stuart, given the statements about the relationship between artist and man which his novels make. Instead, the creative mode which should seek to clarify the author's involvement in his creative processes is used to imply that creativity is minimal, that the artistic process is simply one of selection and refining rather than transformational or even fruitfully exploitative.

As well, this problem of an insensitive or an inappropriate use of biography as a means of understanding Stuart's work shows an insufficient appreciation of the difficulties of autobiographical and biographical study. There is a tendency to feel that biographical detail is objective, that it provides an unequivocally firm base from which an author's work can be understood, which justifies its use as a preliminary to, and interpreter of, the text. However, whether or not autobiography can be treated as an accurate, factual record of experience is thrown into question most immediately by the nature of its writer's memory. As André Maurois is credited with saying, 'Memory is a great artist. For every man and every woman it makes the recollection of his or her life a work of art and an unfaithful record'.[1] It is not just that recollection itself is necessarily totally subjective. So, some events may be forgotten completely and others, in retrospect, given an importance which they did not necessarily have at the time. It has been suggested, for example, that when writing his well-known letter to Malesherbes about the sudden insight he had while on his way to visit

1 James Olney, Metaphors of Self: the Meaning of Autobiography (Princeton, 1972), p. 261. See also, Samuel Beckett, Proust (London, 1931), p. 17: 'Proust had a bad memory . . . The man with a good memory does not remember anything because he does not forget anything'.

Diderot in prison, Rousseau embellished his account to give it the significance which, on reflection, he felt it had.[1] Such a distortion, if it occurred, was not maliciously made but intended rather to draw attention to the quality of an experience felt to be formative since it was at once intensely personal and also offered insights into the universality of certain conditions.

This raises the further question of how far an artist's work, including his autobiography, can be said to be solely a record of himself, and how far it is an expression of a universal experience of which he is a part and into which he merges. As Olney puts it:

> What Eliot does, in a general way, in Four Quartets, as Jung does in his Memories and Montaigne in his Essays, is to weave together personal allusions in such a way as to create a generalized significance, so that the work becomes, in effect, an autobiography of and for Everyman as a philosophical and spiritual being. [2]

This challenge to the possibility of the author's experience being separable from an imaginative universality is taken further by Michael Sprinker in an interesting article entitled Fictions of the Self: The End of Autobiography.[3] Sprinker questions the possibility of autobiography existing in the form of 'the self' as 'author of its own discourse', since, he says, 'Every text is an articulation of the relations between texts, a product of intertextuality, a weaving together of what has already been produced elsewhere in discontinuous form: every subject, every author, every self is the articulation of an intersubjectivity structured within and around the discourses available to it at any moment in time.'[4] The examples which he gives, of Vico's

1 Leon Edel, Literary Biography: The Alexander Lectures, 1955-56 (London, 1957), p. 47.
2 Olney, p. 261.
3 Michael Sprinker, 'Fictions of the Self: The End of Autobiography', in Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical, edited by James Olney (Princeton, 1980), pp. 321-42.
4 Sprinker, p. 325.

Autobiography, Kierkegaard's Repetition, Nietzsche's The Will to Power and Freud's Autobiographical Study, offer strong support to his argument, since they all purport to be, or are accepted as, statements about their author's intellectual growth and life, a process which is inseparable from the texts which influenced them and preceded their own. However, his conclusions are applied equally to works which are fictional in form but which seem to depend heavily on their writer's own life:

> The danger of the direct questioning of the subject about the subject and of all self-reflection of the spirit lies in this, that it could be useful and important for one's activity to interpret oneself falsely. 1

> The origin and the end of autobiography converge in the very act of writing, as Proust brilliantly demonstrates at the end of Le temps retrouvé, for no autobiography can take place except within the boundaries of a writing where concepts of subject, self and author collapse into the act of producing a text. 2

The suggestion here, therefore, is that autobiography cannot be regarded as a true, factual record of an author's life since he is likely to distort that record, consciously or unconsciously, to a greater or lesser degree. This does not imply a deliberate, wilful misrepresentation, but rather the necessary influence of factors such as deficiencies of memory and the close linking of the author's life with his art. Under these circumstances, therefore, autobiography can only be regarded as a type of highly personalised fiction constructed around the life and development of a central character in relation to which all else is perceived and judged. As such, the text partakes of the same universality as other works of art, to the ranks of which it must belong since it does not exist as an objective record but as a text which is the product of the interrelationship of the writer's art, his

1 Sprinker, p. 334.
2 Sprinker, p. 342.

experience, his interpretation of other texts, his attitude to his subject and, finally, his absolute, irreducible self which both informs and partakes of the other factors.

It might be argued, however, that although the autobiographer is subject to these limitations, his readers need not be so limited. A discriminating reader could somehow separate the real truth from elaboration and fantasy, could strain off the fiction and leave the fact. This is the implied justification of Natterstad's use of material from Stuart's fiction to elucidate detail of his life. The reductio ad absurdum of such an argument would be that, if autobiography both must be read as fiction and is capable of yielding absolute fact, then any fiction could be read for biographical details of its author. There is an element of truth here, of course, since any literary biographer would expect that, as Leon Edel says, 'The pattern of the work had yielded the pattern of the life'.[1] The identification of a broad pattern of interrelationship between life and art is acceptable and useful, too, since it is a genuine attempt to understand the formative influences which shaped and influenced the writer's fiction. Literary biography is an investigation of a major factor in the genesis of a text, and one which has an interest outside the text itself since its purpose is 'to discover the particular mind and body that drove the pen in the creative act'.[2] The problem is one of balance. It is unnacceptably reductive for a literary work to be treated solely or even largely from a biographical point of view. As Graham Holderness comments about D. H. Lawrence's Sons and Lovers:

> It is too easy to think of Sons and Lovers as a direct transcription of Lawrence's life, which has no purpose other than to make sense of that life . . . It is true that the events of the novel are very close

1 Edel, p. 38.
2 Edel, p. 44.

indeed to the circumstances of Lawrence's childhood, and adolescence, but the novel still has to be considered as a work of fiction . . . In fact while working on the first draft (while the novel was still Paul Morel) Lawrence described it in this way: 'It will be a novel - not a florid prose poem or a decorated idyll running to seed in realism - but a restrained, somewhat impersonal novel.' 1

The relationship between the writer and his hero is a complex one, then, and it is not possible to make a direct equation between them, even where there seems to be an unusually high correlation between setting and events. It is the directness of his equation of, for example, Stuart and H which weakens Natterstad's work so badly. On the other hand, however, a biographer who refuses to give serious consideration to the major works of his subject is being equally deficient. For example, when Stan Gebler Davies refuses to examine Finnegans Wake in his biography of James Joyce, saying merely 'the happy task of explaining that monstrous production I leave gratefully to others, apart from the bare few pages necessary to demonstrate the nature of the monster on which the greatest novelist of the century wasted seventeen years of his genius', [2] the omission is such as to make the reader suspicious of the quality and purpose of the whole biography.

Even when the right sort of balanced standpoint for examining literature as a mirror of the author's life has been achieved there are other difficulties. One of these is that, as in the case of Francis Stuart, there may be comparatively little known about the subject's life and that little which is known may be overshadowed by his connections with more celebrated personages and events. Other problems are associated with the very nature of biography; Alan Shelston points to

1 Graham Holderness, D. H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction (Dublin, 1982) p. 134. Lawrence's description of his novel appears with minor variations to Holderness's quotation from it in Letters of D H Lawrence, edited by James T. Boulton, Cambridge edition, 2 vols (London, 1979-82) I, 184.

2 Stan Gebler Davies, James Joyce: A Portrait of the Artist (London, 1975) p. 8.

some of these in his definitive work on the subject:

> But even if we grant our ideal biographer complete freedom of access to his sources, intimacy with his subject coupled with detachment in his account, independence of taboos, and moral and political objectivity, it remains impossible to evade the ultimate question about the nature of the truth he tells. [1]

Shelston discusses the change in the nature of biography prompted by Lytton Strachey's Eminent Victorians and Virginia Woolf's essays on biography, the move away from the externals of the subject's life to 'the real current of the hero's existence' and 'problems which only the artist, as distinct from the compiler of biographical records, will be able to solve'.[2] A further difficulty is that the reader might enter into a conspiracy with the biographer to preserve anecdotes about the subject which are attractive although they may be apocryphal. Shelston cites Hesketh Pearson's biography of Oscar Wilde in which 'The dying Wilde was heard to complain of the wallpaper in his dingy Parisian hotel. "It is killing me," Wilde is reported as having said, "One of us had to go"' and comments 'whatever reliability we may feel able to place in (the account) . . . we would not want to give it up, for it seems such an ideal story with which to conclude the life of such a man'.[3]

Finally, there is the problem of point of view as well. The biographer, or the reader of fiction who seeks biography through it, attempts to impose logic and coherence on facts which might have been quite arbitrary, or even illogical, in the life itself. His viewpoint, therefore, is an alien one from that of his subject, both structurally and emotionally. In Richard Ellmann's words, it introduces a point of

1 Alan Shelston, Biography, The Critical Idiom, 34 (London, 1977), p. 11.
2 Shelston, p. 64.
3 Shelston, p. 14.

view which is 'necessarily different from that mixture of self-recrimination and self-justification which the great writer, like lesser men and women, has made the subject of his lifelong conversation with himself'.[1]

At the same time, however, it must be acknowledged that there is still a distinction to be made between works which deliberately utilise their author's background and other types of fiction. There is a certain intimacy between author and work when biographical detail is used extensively and purposefully which suggests that its significance is greater than just the use of objective fact. It is that intimacy which is expressed in Dicken's description of David Copperfield as his 'favourite child',[2] although, of course, the phrase also reveals that David Copperfield is a production - a 'child' - of Dickens and therefore something ultimately separate from him. The relationship here is perhaps that described by Trevor Blount in his introduction to the novel:

> Dickens did more than transliterate autobiography. He fashioned himself anew in what he wrote, and in so doing achieved simultaneously the sanity and distinction of art, and the warmth and quickness of joyous life. 3

Because he 'fashioned himself anew' the novel is not autobiography and an attempt at veracity is not to be expected. Instead, David Copperfield must be considered as one of the masks of Dickens, a persona who is both an extension and a disguise of Dickens himself. A major example of this use of personae is the 'masks' which W. B. Yeats used

1 Richard Ellmann, Golden Codgers (London, 1973), p. 1.
2 Charles Dickens, David Copperfield, Clarendon edition (Oxford, 1981), p. 752; first published in the Preface to the Charles Dickens edition (London, 1867).
3 Charles Dickens, David Copperfield, edited by Trevor Blount, Penguin edition (London, 1966), p. 37.

and created in his poetry and life - Michael Robartes, Owen Aherne, Crazy Jane, to say nothing of Free State senator and public man.[1] Under these circumstances the relationship between the author and his autobiographer does not allow simple interpretation or the establishment of only one set of truths. Yeats the lover may have wooed Maud Gonne and her daughter Iseult unsuccessfully but his failure was the triumph of Yeats the poet whose finest early verse stems from those passions - and whether the intentions of what might be called Yeats's 'self' was to pursue deliberately an unrequitable passion cannot be known easily.

These are areas which Stuart explores and exploits in his work, quite deliberately. In Things To Live For (1936), for example, the narrator says:

> I live in my books the things I have not time to live in life. And of course I always cut a much better figure on the printed page. [2]

The novel is subtitled 'Notes for an Autobiography' but its first person narrator is not necessarily Stuart himself. The narrator is called Francis and has written novels entitled Women and God,[3] Pigeon Irish,[4] The Coloured Dome,[5] Glory,[6] Try The Sky,[7] is contemplating one entitled In Search of Love[8] and has co-edited a periodical entitled To-morrow.[9] All this would suggest that the work is indeed direct autobiography, were it not for two statements. The first, 'I have made myself a general, a bookie's clerk, a racehorse trainer, an aeroplane pilot'

1 For an authoritative discussion of Yeats's use of 'masks' see Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks.
2 Things To Live For, p. 52.
3 Things To Live For, p. 37, 52-3.
4 Things To Live For, p. 184, 227.
5 Things To Live For, p. 58, 184.
6 Things To Live For, p. 164, 184.
7 Things To Live For, p. 97.
8 Things To Live For, p. 276.
9 Things To Live For, p. 253.

suggests a similar relationship between text and author as that ascribed to Dickens, a deliberate attempt to fashion oneself anew, and makes the status of this book similarly ambiguous. The second, 'I live in my books the things I have not time to live in my life' extends that ambiguity and implies that 'Things To Live For' should be interpreted as 'things which are worth living for', that is, potential experience rather than 'things I have lived for', or a genuine past experience. The distancing of the title, too, undercuts the factual, objective status of the novel - it is 'Notes for an Autobiography' rather than autobiography itself.

From one standpoint this might seem to be a mere quibble about what could be called, after all, just a romantic gloss on factual experience, such as any individual, and more so an author, is entitled to make in recalling his life. Indeed, it might be possible to dismiss it in that way were it not that the body of Stuart's work, his aesthetic and the intentions stated in his novels, all demonstrate a purposeful investigation of the relationship between life and art, the creative consciousness and the objective memory. Were this not so, it would be reasonable to expect that the so-called 'autobiographical novels' would tally with each other point for point. In fact, this does not happen, even on the most elementary level; not only are similar backgrounds treated differently and significance given to quite different events in different novels but matters of 'fact' are at variance. An easy comparison, for example, is between the 'Notes For an Autobiography' published in 1936 and Black List, Section H the 'imaginative fiction in which only real people appear' published in 1971. In Things To Live For, the narrator's son is called Ion; and before being captured by the Free State Army, 'I had emptied my parabellum and threw it through a window'.[1] In Black List, Section H H's son is called Ian; and when

1 Things To Live For, p. 42.

captured by the Staters, 'what he was ashamed of was not having once fired a single shot from the gun that he'd brought back from Belgium'.[1] Obviously, both novels are drawing on similar experiences here but equally obviously they are interpreting them differently. There is a warm intimacy between the writer and his heroes but in neither case can they be proven to be the same person.

The deliberateness of this blurring of the lines between fact and fiction, this exploitation of the problems associated with biography and autobiography, is reiterated in Stuart's most recent novel, The High Consistory. There, the disordered chronology of the novel's events is a deliberate attempt to suggest the associativeness of the memory, the subjectivity of its response to the choices made in life, and its resultant closeness to fantasy rather than fact. The narrator says of his disordered notes, 'The record of a lifetime had been lightly shuffled by chance, as is the past, more thoroughly and repeatedly, by memory'[2] and later, 'the distortion of reality, and even its transformation into fantasy, is something I practise as a painter and without which I'd be lost'.[3] It is this 'distortion of reality' which is Stuart's intention in using biographical structure and autobiographical backgrounds and it is the investigation of how that is done that provides fruitful insights into his work, rather than trying to make crude parallels between fiction and life. An equation of fiction with life ignores the complex nature both of autobiography and of Stuart's work. An investigation of their relationship though, leads to questions such as how and why autobiography is an effective part of his method; what there is in common between those novels that have that sort of intimacy with the author; how they differ from other of his work; and what sort of critical understanding of Stuart's aesthetic such

1 Black List, Section H, p. 89.
2 The High Consistory, p. 7-8.
3 The High Consistory, p. 13.

an investigation can bring.

* * * * * * *

The first question must be, which of Stuart's books can be considered to have autobiographical significance? Black List, Section H and Things to Live For have been suggested, partly because their titles and Stuart's comments indicate that he is making extended use of settings, events and people which made a deep impression on him in his own life. Holding back for the moment from the question of how they are interpreted by him, these settings, events and people provide a useful set of points of comparison with other novels. The settings of Lourdes, of Glendalough, and of Germany are clearly all important to him: the Civil War (and the present resurgence of some of its issues in the present Troubles), poultry-farming, and horse-racing provide the next set of reference-points; and the character of his heroes and their relationships with wife, daughter, father and lover complete the autobiographical framework. Immediately, of course, the difficulty arises of how many of these references must be included for a novel to be considered to be autobiographical. For example, the most powerful evocation of the effect of war on Germany is that of The Pillar of Cloud but apart from the hero's relationship with Halka it contains none of the other elements. On the other hand, Pigeon Irish is set in Glendalough on a poultry-farm similar to that owned by Stuart, there is a difficult relationship between the hero and his wife, the excitement of horse-racing is evoked, and the events contain both a civil and a European war, yet for all that the novel's deliberate, powerful imaginative interpretation and presentation of the events hardly qualify it to be called autobiographical. Obviously, there is a pattern here which cannot be solved just by reference to outside events; the purpose of his novels must be considered as other than the polarities of a reworking of life or a total fiction. Instead, the frame of reference

deduced above must be regarded as a group of 'touchstones', experiences which are returned to again and again for fresh examination and to seek further insight. Indeed, these touchstones are identifiable by their recurrence throughout Stuart's work; paradoxically their almost total absence from novels such as The Bridge and Angels of Providence indicates their importance: since they have been re-examined and restated in other novels it is necessary for Stuart to leave them for a period until a further step in the dialectic between author and his past can be taken.

The answer to the question originally posed, then, which of Stuart's novels can be considered as autobiographical, would seem to be that it is the framework outlined which must be regarded as having that sort of significance rather than the novels themselves. On some occasions that framework is used at length with a broadly naturalistic setting and realistic style, as it is in Black List, Section H and Things To Live For; more often though, some of its component parts are considered within a purely imaginative structure. Alternatively, as in The Pillar of Cloud, one 'touchstone' - Germany at the end of the war - may form the subject of a whole novel. Such a developed evocation of setting provides a profound meditation on the experience of war against which its use elsewhere must be measured; in the sense that the novel springs from Stuart's experience of a period and place it can be considered autobiographical, therefore, although it ceases to be so for any practical purpose when it extends those particular experiences to a more universal understanding. For example, it might be argued that the profound understanding which Dominic finds at the end of the novel is autobiographical, but an examination of the text shows that this is an oversimplification:

> They had come through fire and were tempered. She first and then, in his degree, he too. They had not sought to save themselves in the

world, to save their lives, and life was being given to them. They felt it being poured into them, into their bosoms from a measure full and running over. It was something that they could not speak about . . . It was something which they could never touch or examine but they were conscious of it. They felt themselves like the field in which it was hidden, this pearl. [1]

The symbolic language 'fire', 'tempered', 'a measure full and running over', 'this pearl' - indicates the difficulty of expressing this kind of experience in the register associated with autobiography. Indeed, the experience is so profound that 'it was something that they could not speak about', a mystical uniting of the individual with the cosmos, which autobiography may attempt but can never succeed in recounting in full, since its significance lies outside the immediate moment. In a sense, it is similar to the experience of Rousseau referred to earlier, and like that, if it is judged as an autobiographical statement then it may be open to the charge of over-elaboration. This is not to suggest that Stuart did not, indeed, have such an experience. Rather it suggests that in such cases, when the biographical structure and autobiographical background are used as a means of defining identity, the distinction between novel and autobiography becomes almost meaningless; instead, art and life are united in what has been called 'a single gesture of passionate self-exposure', a text which 'disdains to answer the query, fact or fiction?'.[2]

At the same time it is important to recognise the existence of autobiographical 'touchstones' when they appear, since they carry and reflect some of Stuart's most important preoccupations. The theme of spirituality and the mundane, for example, is closely associated with the settings of Lourdes, Glendalough and Germany. All three share a spiritual potential which is belied by their outward appearance and

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 231.
2 A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms, p. 24.

which can be understood only on a personal basis. Lourdes is described as 'The most tawdry and the most lovely, the most blatant and the most secret. You are like a woman dressed and painted as a prostitute, who in reality is full only of a passionate innocence'[1] in Things To Live For, for instance. Similarly, in Pigeon Irish Refearta Church at Glendalough looks only to be a 'little roofless building . . . a few tombstones worn thin like blades thrust into the level moss'.[2] However, Frank's personal response to it belies its insignificant appearance:

> When I stood inside those walls my outlook changed. I would have reacted differently to anything that might have happened to me in there. That is how I felt; full of a tenderness and also of a fanaticism. 3

This celebration of paradoxical duality of setting is felt acutely by H in Berlin:

> Extract from H's War Diary: 'Time: Deepest winter, 1940. Situation: uncertain, compromised, companionless, cold to freezing, stump of broken front tooth needing attention. Alternatively: Alone and free, passionately involved in my own living fiction, imaginative participation unimpaired, unpredictible possibilities.' 4

These are values which are felt on an intensely personal level, an insight into the spiritual potential of the mundane which is experienced individually and which may not be understood by other characters. The touchstone for that lack of understanding is often the hero's wife; Brigid cannot understand Frank's determination to stand out against the staff at Headquarters. She says to Catherine:

> 'I'll tell you what's precious. Frank and my life together is precious.

1 Things To Live For, p. 37.
2 Pigeon Irish, p. 35.
3 Pigeon Irish, p. 35-6.
4 Black List, Section H, p. 308.

That's what you don't know. All these romantic ideas aren't precious compared to that.' 1

It is the part of Catherine to reveal to Frank the importance of the colonies, to enter into his defiance of Headquarters and to support him at the end of the novel. Brigid's horizons are limited by a domestic self-sufficiency which becomes a wilful selfishness; she lacks the sacred attributes, the spiritual energy which is associated with redemptive woman in Stuart's novels and which is a transforming, mystical force.

Brigid's limited vision is developed into a deadening egocentricity in the wives of others of Stuart's heroes. Iseult, in Black List, Section H seems to live 'on an outer planet of her own whose surface had a pure, frosty sparkle' [2] and Nancy Arrigho, in Redemption listens 'as though his words never really reached her, as though she heard them behind a veil of cigarette smoke.' [3] Symptomatic of their sterile introversion is their slatternly behaviour, and lack of concern for the small, caring domestic detail which Stuart invests with so much significance: in Nancy Arrigho's car, for example:

A packet of "Sweet Afton" cigarettes with the flap torn off . . . and the blue leather dressing case with the bits of half-torn-off labels . . . a fur coat with a torn lining all lay together on the floor of the car among the burnt matches. 4

The connection between this sort of untidiness and spiritual deadness is made more explicit in The Pilgrimage where, to Gideon, Veronique's disordered way of life 'seemed to him to come from a kind of lassitude,

1 Pigeon Irish, p. 190.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 403.
3 Redemption, p. 201.
4 Redemption, p. 155.

some inner hopelessness, and it was like a contagion'.[1] So, the ends of cigarettes which she has stubbed out on the undersurface of the furniture seem like a fungus, a malign growth on her inner state and their relationship which neutralises them:

> With an instinctive movement from the past Gilbert felt with his finger under the table by his chair. Yes, there they were, like fungi sprouting in the dark. Under the eaves of the little table, all around the intersection of the top and the frame, cigarettes had been stubbed out and left clinging. He withdrew his hand in a kind of nausea. And when Veronique came in with the coffee things he couldn't bring himself to say the fatal words.
>
> The moment that he had meant to be one of reconciliation passed. [2]

The situation is made the more acute because the hero is aware of it but not able to control it or modify it; his own spiritual state is one of an undeveloped consciousness, which does not allow him to make the necessary concessions, and approaches, or to give the aid required to change the values of his partner. This is possible only after his own consciousness has changed, after he has gone through the suffering and found the mystical experience which broadens his perceptions, alters his values and gives him a changed sympathy. Much of the overwhelming sense of pain and regeneration in Memorial stems from the way in which after Herra's death Sugrue gives the comfort to Liz which he had denied his wife Nancy not from cruelty but from inability to do anything else. Until he had met Herra he had been 'subjected to the old dishonesties',[3] had not been aware of 'loving-steadfastness and long, faithful vigils'.[4] In Liz's words, Nancy was 'always left out like me, never hugged and

1 The Pilgrimage, p. 21.
2 The Pilgrimage, p. 21. See also Black List, Section H, p. 181: 'cigarette butts sprouted in clammy clusters from the undersides of tables, and when he couldn't help taking a look under the bathtub it depressed him to see the various discarded bits of filth Iseult had kicked out of the way.' and Victors and Vanquished, p. 12-13.
3 Memorial, p. 258.
4 Memorial, p. 260.

kissed like I am now, never having her heart expanded by you'.[1]

It is not always possible for the hero to make amends, however, even by proxy. In Redemption, Nancy Arrigho steadfastly refuses to join the community, in spite of Ezra's efforts; her desire for her own home, 'her one joy in a world of mostly hateful people' is representative of her refusal to extend sympathy and understanding to others. Nancy Arrigho leaves with 'a delicate, set expression' on her face and it is left to Aunt Nuala to join the community and to find solace there in spite of her reservations about it and Margareta - she tells Margareta, in a scene of tender humour, '"Upon my word, you're a caution! I don't know that I care for this mauling, but at least you've got a straightforward mug on you, though the devil knows what you mean by all that foreign palaver"'.[2] It is not suggested that such a new contact is easy, however. Romilly feels repulsion for Kavanagh even after she has married him out of pure impulse to bring spiritual comfort: when he kissed her, 'she was faint with disgust and love'.[3] This emotion is much to be preferred, however, to her former complacency, her proposed marriage to Colonel Chambers with its sterile 'sense of order, taste and peace on earth'.[4] As Father Mellowes puts it, 'Hunger and loneliness, prison cells and even prison yards are not hell, little children, but indifference and complacency are the beginning of hell'.[5]

The guilt consequent on indifference is explored in the second of the touchstones concerned with relationships, that between hero and baby daughter, in Victors and Vanquished, Black List, Section H and The High Consistory. The circumstances are similar in all three novels: the

1 Memorial, p. 260.
2 Redemption, p. 244.
3 Redemption, p. 234.
4 Redemption, p. 20.
5 Redemption, p. 222.

hero's baby daughter died of spinal meningitis without him caring and hardly even noticing at the time. When the incident is re-examined after he has gained a deeper spiritual insight, however, he not only sees in it a cause for bitter regret but also gains further insight into himself and the nature of suffering. Luke Cassidy described his experience to Myra thus in Victors and Vanquished:

> 'As far as I was concerned she was left to go through her last days and nights of agony alone . . . One of the most helpless of human creatures, who had been cradled on a summer sun-warmed earth, held tenderly in her mother's arms and at her breast, is torn away from these and plunged all alone into pain and dissolution! Yet for all those years afterwards I had hardly given her or her fate more than a passing thought!
>
> 'Then, one afternoon, between two visits to consulates, I went almost by chance to the graveyard and a grave-digger found the plot for me. At last, Myra, as I stood there, my eyes were opened. For a moment I thought I understood the meaning of that short life, and, instead of coming away in misery and despondency I had a glimpse of a power that works in what is most obscure and weak.' 1

Luke's own plunge 'all alone into pain and dissolution' must be understood in the context of his self-recrimination about his attitude to Dolores's death, while his realisation of 'the power that works on what is most obscure and weak' is an index of the progress of the redemptive experience. The similar experience of H in Black List, Section H is described with a more brutal honesty which spares H much less than Luke Cassidy is spared. H 'hadn't loved the baby, had hardly taken her in, except for fleeting moments, and her loss couldn't reduce his emotions to a single unbearable one'[2] and at the graveside 'He stood dry-eyed'[3]; the power of his later realisation is the greater, however, since he understands more fully the eternal quality of the baby's suffering and its significance in human and cosmic terms. When he visits the grave thirty years later, 'He came at long last to realize

1 Victors and Vanquished, p. 146.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 45.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 46.

that this and the other neighbouring tombstones, many of them overgrown with ivy, were speaking to him of a reality outside of time'.[1] In The High Consistory the experience is refined still further, to take in explicitly other sufferers and relate them intimately to Simeon Grimes's own condition and what might be called the 'universal harmony':

> Whatever the reason I began to hear the painful music that I believe is constantly emanating from the dying and despairing, its waves passing through even the most cheerful and sensible minds unrecorded, jammed or silenced by the same mysterious agency that intent on making life seem worthwhile and on its continuance, has linked breeding and orgasm . . .
>
> I recognised the screams of my baby daughter uttered in April 1922 in a children's hospital, now pulled down, dying of spinal meningitis, that I hadn't been present to hear at the time.
>
> I shared with my father his last hours in delirium tremens in a room of a mental home in Townsville, Australia, in July 1902 . . .
>
> One night I was ushered into Libertas Schultze-Boysen's cell in the Alexanderplatz on an evening before Christmas, 1942. Without hope, even of a tolerable death, abandoned to the ravages of her jailers, she was crouched in a corner, her bruised eyes staring.
>
> I also witnessed the death of the ocelot, a creature I'd never seen. [2]

The power of this account is not solely in the pain and anguish it catalogues, terrible though that is. Rather, it is in its incessantness - 'constantly emanating' - and its unavoidability - 'passing through even the most cheerful and sensible minds'. It is universal in both senses, it is felt by everyone and it is the quality which links man to the cosmos, the 'mysterious agency'. As such, it is the suffering through which redemption is found, a status implied by the comparison of it with 'breeding and orgasm,' both through the image of birth and new life and the association of spiritual and sensual love which forms a major theme in Stuart's work. The suffering of the baby daughter here is also that of Grimes's father, of Libertas, of the ocelot, and of Grimes himself, in an empathy more perfect, pervasive and effective than

1 Black List, Section H, p. 46.
2 The High Consistory, p. 41-42.

that described in the other novels. This is not to say that the extension from baby to other characters does not exist elsewhere. In Black List, Section H it is present by implication in the fantasy of H in which:

> he constructed a machine out of which, like Moses with Aaron's rod, he could cause a sparkling stream to flow. He saw himself trundling his mobile dispenser into precincts reached through a bolted door at the end of tiled corridors, or alongside institutional beds in the endless nights. There were also recipients of the long, cool, citron-flavored drinks whose faces were not those of complete strangers, though H never defined them too closely. 1

The thirst which he assuages here is, as the Biblical reference suggests, a spiritual one as well as a physical one; in this context the sufferers include his father, behind the 'bolted door' of the asylum where he died as well as the baby in the hospital bed where she died. However, the idea is not as refined nor as explicit as it is in the later novel. H's sympathy extends to a relief of suffering but at first to only a temporary, alcohol-induced experience of it: when in Paris he finds that 'in what he thought of as the state of third-degree intoxication produced by the Chianti drunk while still in bed to quench his hangover thirst, he entered into touch with entities in his subconscious and in the past, or at the insection of these where, when he managed to reach that distant spot, he met his father'.[2] Grimes, however, is able, even obliged, to share the experience fully and involuntarily, to perceive it on a level far deeper and to gain an insight far greater than either Luke Cassidy or H.

A similar process of refinement is gone through in the nature of the hero's lover, the woman who contains both sacred and sensual

1 Black List, Section H, p. 423-4. See also p. 179 for a further use of the image of thirst.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 178.

qualities and through whom he understands the redemptive experience. In the pre-war novels the heroines tend to be less realistic figures, more heavily symbolic of their sacred potential, since the theme of sacred and sensual is not developed there as much as it is later. Catherine in Pigeon Irish, for example, suggests 'a martyr, a virgin martyr',[1] and rather than a woman of flesh and blood, she is 'a flicker of ash and gold and momentary translucent flame'.[2] Hylla, too, in The White Hare is 'a suggestion rather than a statement of womanhood'[3] and her physical womanliness, expressed in giving birth, has to be counterbalanced by the spiritual refinement which produces her stark beauty at the end of the novel, where 'her pale, thin face had now more than ever the stark beauty of a thing that has been stripped of all inessentials and is left bare'.[4] These early lovers are perceived from the exterior, almost as spirits rather than as flesh or at least as spirit made flesh as Sonia is in The Angel of Pity. In the post-war novels, however, the balance is reversed dramatically. The lover may seem to be angelic but she is really unequivocally fleshly: so, Lisette believes 'Halka was my angel'[5] and 'she thought of her sister whom she adored as being already a being removed far above this miserable world and, from the heights where she dwelt, smiling down upon her, Lisette'.[6] However, Halka has been suffering the most acute physical degradation in an asylum where:

> 'I learned what it was to be executed. We all learnt the electric death in which we lay in our beds on rubber sheets, because when we came back to life, hours later, we were always in a filthy mess. Oh yes, when you must suffer this killing every Friday and Tuesday, there's not much of the angel left in you. You're publicly executed, and it's like a kind of public rape and you wake up in your own excrement . . . They had

1 Pigeon Irish, p. 75.
2 Pigeon Irish, p. 158.
3 The White Hare, p. 31.
4 The White Hare, p. 313.
5 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 27.
6 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 29-30.

cured me of all my angelic fancies.'[1]

The ethereal ideal and the physical reality combine in Halka and from her bodily suffering a spiritual reality is produced, a spiritual potential which is not an idealisation or an abstraction. It is because her spiritual power is a result of her bodily experience that spiritual and sacred loves can find such a united expression in Halka; when she makes love with Dominic in his prison cell:

> The wave that with a flash had spread through her, like a soft explosion within her, flashing through her, melting her very bones, died out in her and she came back to the dusk and it was quieter and deeper than before. Never before had she felt like this. There had always been fear and a residue of horror at the bottom of her heart . . . Now she lay beside him on the straw and felt secure and at rest. It was a new, new experience for her. 2

Because of this greater interiorisation of the redemptive experience and the changed nature of the lover it is possible for Stuart to develop his expression of spiritual power still further. In Redemption, therefore, Margareta's physicality is emphasised by the injury she has received at the same time as the injury neutralises her sexual potential and transforms it into a spiritual one. This is made clear by the images she uses to describe the accident:

> 'Sprawled out on my belly like a rat in a trap . . . with the teeth of the trap into my back and side, and my face in dust and plaster . . . There I was spreadeagled like one crucified, with my arms out and wedged down, and the blood running down between my buttocks and turning cold on the concrete under my belly. I was fainting and coming back, fainting and coming back'. 3

The experience of a state suggesting death and resuscitation alternately

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 39.
2 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 221-2.
3 Redemption, p. 225.

as well as a sexual, orgasmic rhythm - 'fainting and coming back' - is similar to that of Halka in The Pillar of Cloud but it is connected more clearly to a spiritual state by the image 'like one crucified'. Through this, the physical status of the heroine is redefined as a spiritual one at the same time as the physical state maintains its realism. In Black List, Section H, the combination of both states is more advanced still. Halka Witebsk's spiritual power is innate and manifest in her 'biblical phraselogy'[1] and in their lovemaking in which 'sensations were spiritual-sensual, sacred-obscene, complete as never before'.[2] In Memorial the refinement is continued by associating Herra intimately with the hare motif and with Mary Magdalene, while also insisting on her adolescent sensuousness. There is no idealisation of the heroine, at all, in the sense that there was in Pigeon Irish; Herra describes her sexual status as 'a little bitch that scratches and bites when she doesn't happen to feel like it'.[3] Finally, both the animal image and the interconnection with other women are explored still further in The High Consistory. This is achieved partly by the reference to a 'Sisterhood' of which Claire is a member and which includes Libertas, Ste. Thérèse, Miranda, Pacella and Nicole as well as famous women from fiction and life, such as Katusha from Tolstoy's Resurrection and Emily Brontë, and partly by the litany which associates Claire with animal and human life, spiritual and mundane, sacred and sensual, in a expression of her mystical qualities:

> Claire my love, Claire my midnight mare, Claire priestess of savage and bestial rites, Claire schoolteacher, Claire the innocent, Claire the mystic, Claire the hostess, Claire mediatrix between two kingdoms, Claire of the Holy Sisterhood. [4]

1 Black List, Section H, p. 382.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 416.
3 Memorial, p. 137. 'it' refers to sexual intercourse.
4 The High Consistory, p. 246.

Here, Claire becomes a personification of spiritual qualities and their associations in the novel as well as remaining a realistic person, schoolteacher and hostess. She is 'mediatrix between two kingdoms' in three ways in the novel: first, between spiritual and mundane; secondly between the private experience of Grimes and herself, and their public appearance - in order for them to go to Inisheask Claire had 'to be Mrs Grimes on the island'[1]; and thirdly between values and relationships which are socially acceptable - 'my love' - and those which are not - 'savage and bestial rites'. The lover is an expression of the love here, as Catherine was in Pigeon Irish, but with the differences that here the expression is more complex, characterisation more refined, the love and the lover knit into a matrix from which both they and the experience of redemption may be derived, and the whole a more interiorised, more opaque, evocation of person and quality.

The next set of touchstones which produce the sense of autobiography in Stuart's work is made up of events such as horse-racing, poultry farming, and war, which recur in much of his work. Like character and the settings of Lourdes and Glendalough, these events are interrelated with theme and motif as well as with other touchstones. This is indicated, for example, by Grimes's description of Claire as 'my midnight mare' and elsewhere, 'my black, shiny, big-bottomed, long-tailed mare, and, what's more, in heat',[2] which links Claire with the motif of horse-racing and the theme of gambling. The race-course appears in Stuart's work as a place where chance rules, where ordinary values may be turned upside down, where the idea of winning and losing in a material and spiritual sense is reappraised, and where mystical insight can be found beneath its outward material, sophisticated appearance. The action of attending a race-meeting, therefore, becomes

1 The High Consistory, p. 193.
2 The High Consistory, p. 197.

an expression of commitment to exploring a new set of values and experiences. This idea is expressed in Things To Live For in a metaphor of sport as the dramatic part of life:

> Irish race-courses; what hours of happiness and almost despair, too, I have had on them! One passes through those turnstiles into another world. A world where life is compressed, lived more quickly, more vividly. Sport is dramatic in so far as it is a counterpart of life, a faithful symbol of life . . . The trainer, the jockey, the owner of a horse and to some extent the better identifies himself with the drama, steps as it were into the arena with only his skill and judgement against the enormous weapons of chance. 1

What appears as a physical battle against overwhelming odds here - 'the enormous weapons of chance' - and a microcosm of life intensified, a 'faithful symbol' of it, 'compressed', becomes more obviously identified with spiritual exploration and adventuring in Black List, Section H:

> Browsing through a Dublin newsagent's H came on the thick, squat, buff-colored, paperbound publication called Racing-up-to-Date. As soon as he saw it he knew it was what he was looking for, as years earlier he'd been drawn in an out-of-the-way corner of a bookshop to a life of St. Rose of Lima, Juliana's Revelations of Divine Love, and The Ascent of Mount Carmel, by St. John of the Cross. 2

Risk on the racecourse is allied to risk in pushing one's consciousness into unknown territories. It is in this form that it appears throughout Stuart's work[3], and it is especially emphasised when the better is also the owner. Both the narrator of Things To Live For and H purchase a filly named Sunnymova[4] which loses its first race, although in the

1 Things To Live For, p. 59.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 181.
3 Apart from The Angel of Pity, The Bridge, Julie, The Pillar of Cloud, The Flowering Cross, The Pilgrimage and Victors and Vanquished, racecourses appear in all of Stuart's work.
4 In Things To Live For, p. 32 'Iseult called the filly Sunnymova'; in Black List, Section H, p. 218 H chooses the name and worries that Iseult will ask '"Why ever that, darling? What on earth does it mean?"'

former novel 'We were beaten in a great race by a neck'[1] and in the latter 'To see the filly fall back after two or three furlongs and trail in at the end of the field was failure and defeat'.[2] The identification between horse and owner is a total one, the horse's struggle against the others on the course paralleled, picked up and re-echoed by the owners struggle against 'the enormous weapons of chance'. Winning, therefore, is 'not just the thrill of landing a big bet, but of a sort of personal triumph, having pitted oneself against the field'[3] and conversely, Sunnymova's defeat 'started H asking himself some vital questions: Who, and where, was that person, faithful and true, who might act as supreme and ruthless arbiter in distinguishing the real from the hallucinatory?'.[4] The links with theme and motif are clear here; but the significance goes beyond this, to a more deeply personal, more passionate affirmation of a set of values which have been chosen as a context of living. The racecourse becomes the world of both spiritual experience and everyday living; the decision to purchase a race-horse is a decision to commit oneself most deeply to that world; and to risk everything on a bet is to reaffirm commitment to those values, to 'falling in love with life, the dark deep flow below the surface'[5] the 'all-obsessive and perilous inward journey'.[6]

This unremitting exposure of the self to anxiety, pain and defeat is one part of the road to spiritual insight. The other is through an experience which is quite different in quality but no less in intensity, developing the capacity for loving care in small matters. It is the absence of this in several heroes' wives which makes them spiritually sterile and which is represented by their lack of care for their

1 Things To Live For, p. 65.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 261.
3 Things To Live For, p. 60.
4 Black List, Section H, p. 261.
5 Things To Live For, p. 9.
6 Black List, Section H, p. 185.

surroundings; so, H 'recognized as signs of the apathy that was growing within' the 'various discarded bits of filth Iseult had kicked out of the way'.[1] The poultry farming which several of Stuart's heroes undertake is one way of developing qualities opposite to that apathy, of coming to understand the need for tenderness and nurturing. In Women and God this is expressed negatively. Colin's poultry farm is a large mechanized operation:

> They saw the brooder house with the chickens in steel batteries, living in semi-darkness on a wire-netting floor, the tops of their heads stained a vivid green, or ultramarine, or scarlet, to distinguish the flocks.
>
> 'Are they happy like that?' asked Laura.
>
> 'They can't be unhappy,' Colin said. He didn't know what he was talking about. [2]

The narrator's abrupt dismissal of Colin's careless, inhuman comment is a part-preparation for Colin's overwhelming sense of guilt at the end of the novel as be breaks through his insensitivity into a truer understanding of suffering. It is this positive valuing of the vulnerability and loneliness of the poultry which is expressed in Good Friday's Daughter, where 'when a pullet died it was an event to be looked into and mourned'.[3] There the combination of nurturing new life and spiritual values finds expression in the ark motif, suggested by the creation of a new poultry house by 'putting a skylight into the roof of the large outhouse . . . The new flood of light let into the barn seemed itself part of the subtle change in the air'.[4] In Black List,

1 Black List, Section H, p. 181.
2 Women and God, p. 237.
3 Good Friday's Daughter, p. 141. See also The Flowering Cross, p. 9 where Louis remembers the care with which he looked after his poultry.
4 Good Friday's Daughter, p. 98. See also Black List, Section H, p. 149: 'What particularly pleased him were the skylights let into the thick old slates that shed from an unexpected angle a flood of limpid light through the ancient shadows'.

Section H, H's poultry farming represents his ability to throw himself whole-heartedly into an activity, to make the sort of commitment demanded by racing and mysticism, without weighing the decision carefully insofar as it concerns his inner development, although taking every precaution to ensure the comfort and health of the poultry:

> He arranged with the contractors . . . to repair and convert the huge old outbuildings . . . into laying houses, and had a local carpenter construct tiers of pigeonholes with which to line the whitewashed stone walls. These nests H designed . . . he bought an extra hundred White Leghorn pullets and laid in a store of Sussex-ground oats, bran, fish meal, maize meal, oats and barley . . . He had no inclination to consider whether his new preoccupation was likely to give him what his spirit yearned for. Indeed, at the moment, the desire he was conscious of was for a high egg yield and a prize at the show. Juliana and St. Catherine of Siena were far away and long ago, whispers in the clamor of chirping, crowing, rustling, pecking. 1

His success in this enterprise is considerable; when he visits another poultry farmer he feels obliged to pretend that his farm is subject to some disease 'in case she began to suspect something strange about him, that he was no more a bona fide poultry farmer than he suspected he appeared'.[2] Of course, he is not a poultry farmer in the accepted sense; although he needs it to provide money to support his family he is far more aware of the innate value of the exercise rather than its economics. Indeed, his decision to start the farm with no more experience than could be culled from books indicates the unusualness of his attitudes, as is his sense of making money as a means to other more vital experiences such as racing, travelling, and the period spent in Paris with the two girls. In this, the two types of experience, the savage, unremitting assault on the self and the meditative nurturing of life are combined, and make way for the revelations which he will find through the suffering he experiences in wartime Germany.

1 Black List, Section H, p. 148-9.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 150-1.

So far, therefore, a variety of functions have been attributed to the settings, events and characters which make up the autobiographical touchstones in Stuart's work. They have been seen to share interconnected qualities although they may appear to be separate: Lourdes, Germany and Glendalough all contain a spiritual potential which belies their outward appearance and links them with the theme of spiritual and mundane. Personal relationships, with wife, lover and child, express the need for loving care, the mystical potential of suffering and pity and its reverse, the deadening sterility of indifference. These qualities are refined and developed to be applied on a universal scale, taking in animals as well as people and through them evoking the motif of the hare and linking them to its significance. The parallel, complementary action of pushing oneself into extreme experiences, through racing, through relationships, and its austere insights into the nature of the gambler and thus the artist and the mystic has been found in the touchstones too. Thus, they have been seen to function as producers of a sense of continuity in the work, as a factor which integrates as well as develops. Through them, the moral and spiritual foundation of Stuart's work has been preserved since they insist on the unchanging importance of responses to certain events. As well, they make more concrete such abstract concepts as mysticism by founding them in naturalistic detail, thereby affording them the ambiguity of expression which is the only precise way in which they can be described. Finally, of course, the touchstones provide a means of developing the notion of a personal redemption, which is central to Stuart's work, and giving it impact by personalising its experiencies on the one hand and representing them in a variety of ways on the other.

The overall effect of this must be to confirm that these things are not autobiography itself but links with autobiographical experience which has been used as the basis of a series of experiments, examined

and tested in a variety of ways and with an increasingly refined, profitable result. They are, therefore, artistic evaluations and transmutations of experience, deliberately altered and lived anew, rather than an attempt to recapture the experience objectively. In a sense, then, they have no reality beyond the context of the novels in which they appear; on the other hand, however, their intimacy with the experiences of Stuart himself cannot be ignored since it is that very intimacy which gives them validity and impact. At the same time as they seem to make irrelevant the notion of autobiography, therefore, they actually invoke it strongly, and nowhere is it more insistent than in the final touchstone, that of a war-time setting. Here, Stuart is deliberately courting the problems of history. Clearly, novels such as The Pillar of Cloud[1] cannot be separated from their historical contexts. Equally, though, to allow development of his idea of redemption, Stuart focuses on physical violence and desolation as a metaphor for spiritual isolation and aridity, so that historical events are, in a sense reinterpreted in a personal fashion which emphasises them as symbol and setting.[2] Further, it introduces the equally important question of the relationship between the author and his hero, which is clearly significant in any investigation into the autobiographical nature of fiction.

The war which provides the background of Pigeon Irish is an imaginary one which has engulfed the whole of Europe, although it was

1 The British Foreign Office seems to have felt this in the most literal terms. Foreign Office Index: 1948, 4 vols (Liechtenstein, 1979), IV, p. 159 includes under 'Stuart, Francis' the entry 'Repatriation: Press report on book The Pillar of Cloud'. The file relating to the entry is not in the Public Record Office.

2 An interesting comparison might be made with the work of Charles Dickens for the use of historical contexts by a personal reinterpretation of them. In Dombey and Son, for example, the railway is presented as a terrible, destructive animal - especially where Carker is killed - without real consideration of its economic and social implications.

inspired by the real Four Courts engagement in 1922.[1] The novel, though, was written in 1932, ten years after both that event and Stuart's own participation in the Civil War and while it is nevertheless a powerful evocation of the uncompromising spirit of its protagonist, indisputably it is fictitious. Insofar as identification can be made between real and imaginary characters, the narrator of the novel, Frank Allen seems to be a 'disguised' O'Malley; as O'Malley was 'for a period of four crucial months the (Acting) Assistant Chief of Staff of the IRA, and OC of the Northern Eastern Command (Ulster and Leinster), and a member of the five-man Army Council[2] so Frank Allen has to 'take over the Home Command'[3] and joins the six-man Army Council.[4] Both, too, are possessed of sensitivity and moral strength, those qualities which Calton Younger, in Ireland's Civil War, describes in O'Malley as 'his poet's soul and the steel of him'[5] and both too are threatened with death by their enemies but are not killed. On the other hand, Stuart deliberately makes the parallel inexact by referring to a fictitious historical background: Pigeon Irish is set in Ireland which 'had won the Republic'.[6] This maintaining of tenuous links with reality while deliberately distancing the action from it is increased by the precedent that is quoted for Frank Allen's sentence to execution without a courtmartial:

1 See Francis Stuart, 'The Idealists Worsted in the Game', Sunday Press, 23 April 1978, p. 21. In this review of Ernie O'Malley's The Singing Flame Stuart says: 'Not that the Four Courts drama did not inspire some impressionable and imaginative young men and women. In my case it was largely instrumental in my taking part in the civil war. And also in my writing a novel called Pigeon Irish a little later, in which a disguised O'Malley appears and where the execution of four members of the garrison, Mellows, O'Connor, Barrett and McKelvey forms one of the themes'.

2 Ernie O'Malley, The Singing Flame, edited by Frances-Mary Blake (Dublin, 1978), p.5.

3 Pigeon Irish, p. 106.

4 Pigeon Irish, p. 182-3.

5 Calton Younger, Ireland's Civil War (London, 1968), p. 28.

6 Pigeon Irish, p. 106.

'I have found a precedent that dispenses with the necessity for a court-martial,' he said. He turned over the leaves in his hands and stopped at one of the sheets.
'On December 8th, 1922, four officers of the Irish Republican army, including a general, who had been held prisoners for several months after their capture from a fortified position, were executed by order of the Executive Council without court-martial and without charge. In that case the gravity of the situation was held to fully justify this summary action. In the present case the situation is even graver.' 1

This is the execution referred to by Stuart in his review of O'Malley's book, presumably the incident which O'Malley recounts thus:

An orderly read the evening paper to me. Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows, Joe McKelvey and Dick Barrett had been executed that morning, 8 December, without trial as an official reprisal for the death and wounding the previous day of two Free State members of parliament. 2

At the end of The Singing Flame O'Malley says:

we who had been beaten in the fight, who had withstood the jail war, parted to take up the threads of inscrutable destiny; some to begin life over again. 3

In this, there is a sense of defeat, of division and, for those who did not 'begin life over again' a kind of death. Stuart's novel, however, holds out a hope which is almost a certainty, of spiritual regeneration, of new life of the soul as well as of the body. It is this contrast between spiritual loss and spiritual gain which separates the memoir from the novel. More than the literary devices of motif and narrative structures, Stuart's vision of redemption through defeat and suffering makes his war into a symbolic one, without losing any of its excitement and incident, and separates it from the political and military events which inspired it.

1 Pigeon Irish, p. 260.
2 The Singing Flame, p. 197.
3 The Singing Flame, p. 290.

War settings became more symbolic as Stuart's work progressed in the period between 1932 and 1939, more an expression of a universal disorder and less connected with history. In The Coloured Dome, for instance, the legendary, powerful leader of the IRA, Tulloolagh McCoolagh, is 'a tall slim girl',[1] an interesting choice from the point of view of Stuart's aesthetic since she combines the idea of the redemptive power of woman with the purgative suffering of war, but hardly a realistic character. Interestingly, this link between woman and war is continued by other of Stuart's novels of this period. In Glory, for example, Mairead needs to be fully involved in war across almost the whole world for her to be purged of the desire for temporal power and to be able to turn her attention to realising her spiritual potential.[2] Finally, the war in Glory cannot touch the worst part of the world, its self-complacency; that can be modified only on a personal basis, through experiencing 'a deep aloneness. To leave all the fussiness, the pettiness, the gregariousness of the world and be alone. Not to try to conquer it or triumph over it. To desire nothing from it. To be alone'.[3]

For this theme to work well it is necessary for the war-setting to be highly symbolic, a metaphor for the destructiveness of complacency and spiritual death, a sort of 'Dark Night' through which the woman must pass to realise her redemptive powers. It is most effective in Pigeon Irish and in The Angel of Pity where war appears as a vast impersonal force, generating a violence and mediocrity against which the experiences of the narrators are revelatory, even epiphany-like. When Stuart tries to ground world-war in naturalistic detail it becomes too exteriorised, unconvincing as either realism or imagination: viewed in

1 The Coloured Dome, p. 24.
2 Glory, p. 228-30.
3 Glory, p. 230.

this light, Glory, for example, is an artistic failure and its merits are only apparent if, as its reviewer in New Statesman, suggests, it is regarded as operating 'with a logic that cuts under the surface of life, down into the deep layers of the spirit, an almost mystical drama'.[1] In contrast with this, however, the description of the Civil War and the subsequent imprisonment of the narrator of Things To Live For is entirely convincing. Partly this stems from the detail that is provided - the lice, hunger and fear - but partly also from the way in which that detail leads on to what is convincing as an insight or emotion. After being moved to the Curragh, having spent six months in Maryborough, the hero sees a woman far off and is struck intensely by the meaning and value which the experience has:

> I saw a woman in a red dress and I watched her in astonishment, not having seen anyone but men for a long time. She seemed like an incredible invention of God that had just appeared on the earth. 2

Most of all, perhaps, the conviction in the portrayal stems from the way the experience is assimilated into other experiences, the way in which it is seen as part of a larger framework rather than being concentrated on too closely. This is implicit in the fact that the incident forms only one chapter in the book and it is also made explicit by the narrator, who says of the hunger-strike: 'I was no longer bored. I was embarked on a game again . . . Staking our lives against public opinion . . . to me everything is a game except perhaps religion and love; and love is a game, too, when I come to think of it'.[3] Here, war is linked with gambling, with love, and through the bracketing of love and religion which suggests their interdependence, with religion as

1 Hamish Miles, p. 268.
2 Things To Live For, p. 46.
3 Things To Live For, p. 47.

well, in spite of the exception made for it. Conversely, therefore, this allows the image of war to be used for the author's experience of life, which he describes as having 'grown used to living on the side of lost causes'.[1] The lost causes image is expanded into a powerful metaphor of defiance in the face of inevitable defeat a few paragraphs further on:

> I crouched in my interior dugout while the barrage came down. That I could see no enemy nor hardly know whom the enemy was made no difference. Those are often the conditions of that peculiar war that is life. I would not retreat, surrender. But what did those words mean? No more to me than they would to that soldier crouching with hunched shoulders, helmet forward, in the hurricane of steel and thunder. One is caught in the barrage; one grips tightly a rifle that for the moment is useless. But at least one holds on to it, does not fling it away. And somewhere from in front the unseen, unknown enemy advances behind his barrage.2

This passage is remarkable in several ways. First, it separates the narrator from the rest of the battle in progress, from which he is divided as he crouches in the 'interior dugout while the barrage came down.' Then, the separation is increased because the dugout is an interior one; the image operates on two levels, with the war, the 'barrage' as a symbol of any opposition or attack and the 'dugout' as any refuge from it, and with the war as a real one, part of the Civil War which has just been described, and the dugout a mental refuge from it, a refusal by the narrator to commit himself to it. That the attack is a barrage, a continual shelling by guns, makes it more impersonal and increases the sense of isolation of the narrator, an isolation deliberately emphasised by the statement 'I could see no enemy nor hardly know whom the enemy was'. This, too, gives a sense of equivocation, a refusal to commit himself to a side which increases the isolation and adds a need for total independence since the

1 Things To Live For, p. 42.
2 Things To Live For, p. 49.

unidentifiable enemy may exist anywhere. The first part of the image is rounded off with the statement that 'Those are often the conditions of that peculiar war called life' and it seems as though the narrator is suggesting that a self-sufficient, introspective inactivity is the only way of dealing with suffering. If that were the case, the idea would be a sterile one. However, the image is picked up again with the words 'I would not retreat, surrender', a refusal to give way under the 'barrage' which indicates that the inactivity is a form of passive defiance, and that movement is avoided because progress forward is not possible at that point, not because progress is considered unimportant. Then occurs an unusual separation of personae: the narrator, who calls himself 'me', refers to 'that soldier crouching with hunched shoulders', the 'I' who said at the start of the passage 'I crouched in my interior dugout'. There is a quite deliberate separation, more obvious than the earlier double-operation of the image, suggesting that 'me' and 'that soldier' are two different people, or, since the phrase 'I crouch in my' makes that impossible, that they are two versions of the same person. The one version is 'I', the soldier, the person engaged in the real war; the other version is 'me', the owner of the interior dugout, the person to whom war is only another part of life and a symbol for life. The implications of this are that the commitment to the Civil War of the soldier 'I' is balanced, perhaps neutralised, by the view of it taken by 'me' and the question of the significance of engagement in the war is raised at a fundamental level. Finally, the two personae are re-joined, merging into the impersonal 'one' which comprehends them both: 'One is caught in the barrage' and the idea of defiance is extended into positive action - 'one grips tightly a rifle . . . at least one holds on to it, does not fling it away.' The inadequacy of the rifle to combat the barrage is obvious both literally and symbolically, and its retention can be only a symbol of defiance and hope, defiance against

the 'unseen, unknown enemy', and hope that it will somehow be possible to stop his advance.

The division of the narrator suggests that the commitment felt to the Civil War was not a wholehearted one, a suggestion which is reinforced by its inclusion as one area of experience in a list of them. In the context of the whole novel, the chapter 'Fighting' forms only a small part and amongst the 'Things To Live For' which are the subject of the novel, racing, religion and love seem more important than fighting. Most important of all, though, the division into the active soldier 'I' and the distanced, interior 'me' suggests that the real importance of the war lay in the personal insights and development it brought, not in military glory. This is not a rejection of commitment, as the image of holding on to the rifle indicates, but a deliberate questioning of the subject of commitment. In the last of his novels to use a war-setting in this pre-1939 part of his work, The Angel of Pity Stuart's commitment is unequivocally to compassion and to the deep, spiritual experience of love. War is used there as a background of impersonal violence, a dehumanising force similar to that in Pigeon Irish. The enemy is 'the new civilisation . . . where all religious and romantic sentiment had been rigorously ground out'[1] and set against that is the narrator's belief that 'the highest achievements of man are lonely, solitary things that he experiences in his own heart when he lavishes on another being that pure love of which I have already spoken'.[2] The opening of the novel recalls the soldier-image in Things To Live For:

> I imagine a grey morning breaking over some desolate front in the next great war. I am crouching in a concrete redoubt, partially blown in, with one companion, the sole survivors of a waste of mud and water reflecting the concrete-coloured sky'. 3

1 The Angel of Pity, p. 19.
2 The Angel of Pity, p. 43.
3 The Angel of Pity, p. 11.

In fact, the war is over, and the focus of the novel is on Sonia and the redemptive experience of the narrator. War is important only because it has led to that experience, because it has provided the conditions in which the redemptive insight is possible. That is its only justification and only value as far as the narrator is concerned, and even that is not meant as a condoning of war. The fact that this creative impulse has been generated by destruction is a sign of the power of 'infinite love' which can turn anything to its purposes, even ruthless violence:

> I saw now more and more clearly that nothing is wasted, nothing is without purpose in the destiny of man. From battles in which hundreds of thousands are killed right down the scale to the fashioning of a nest or a dolls' house, all is made to serve the mysterious purposes of infinite love. 1

The imaginary war in The Angel of Pity images and parallels the breaching of the narrator's imaginative limitations. Sonia's literally angelic nature is beyond all he can imagine; the experience is thus both a destructive and creative one, and the shattered landscape reflects the shattered 'inscape' of the narrator. The profundity of the insight, however, is dependent on the liberating of the creative spirit through its action in an imaginary war; as such it is necessarily limited since in a sense the imagination is feeding off itself, and although the language of the novel is persuasively incantatory, the overall effect must be, at best, visionary rather than realistic. The urge to push forward to new insights in not matched by the quality of the experience on which those insights are founded and this, perhaps, provides the best reason for Stuart's decision to utilise in his novels the first-hand

1 The Angel of Pity, p. 284. See also Glory, p. 240: '"But do you think a god would upset a world and kill thousands for the sake fo making one vain, silly girl into a woman with a little wisdom and a little humility?" "It has been done like that before,' he said'.

experience of deprivation and defeat which he gained in Germany during the Second World War.

In the pre-1939 novels Stuart had explored war as a symbol for a disintegration which was both vaster and more intimate than that of the military battlefield. Pigeon Irish, Glory, and The Angel of Pity were all concerned with a breakdown of universal values to allow their restatement and reaffirmation; and with a stripping bare of the mind and soul of their heroes in order for them to undergo the redemptive experience which linked them with eternal, mystical values. The symbolic, imaginative experience of war led to a revaluing of the realistic world, which entailed not only a rejection of political power, material wealth and military strength but also the discovery of a huge spiritual potential in small, commonplace things and acts of love. In a sense, therefore, all of the novels are an act of faith. The only real experience of war which they can be based on is the Civil War and that reality does not seem to have made the same impact on Stuart's writing as his imagined vast conflicts. That is not to say that the seeds of one are not contained in the other but rather that the two experiences are quite different as, for example, the comparison of Pigeon Irish with the real Ernie O'Malley's life shows. The sort of vast, insensate violence that Stuart wrote about before 1936 was outside his personal knowledge and the statements which his novels make about the spiritual insights which could be won from it are made from belief, not experience. This perhaps is the crucial difference between the pre-war and the post-war novels. In Try the Sky Stuart says: 'The nun in her cell lost in contemplation is but inspired by a desire which, dammed in its earthly courses, rises and rises to unimaginable heights'[1] and there is something of that duality in all of the pre-war novels which have

1 Try the Sky, p. 168.

been considered. After the period in Germany, however, the urge to find new insights which had been limited by the milieu in which Stuart lived was undammed and instead of imaginative symbol, he was in a position to write about reality.

The most powerful evocation of post-war Germany is that of The Pillar of Cloud. The hunger and cold, isolation and the deprivation which pervade the novel are introduced at its start and provide the main indexes of the experience of war:

> Snow had fallen in the night and covered the ruins. It was bitterly cold as the tall, thin man, who, by his loose and lanky movements, by the very way his worn winter coat hung on him, could be seen to be a foreigner, entered a large undamaged building at the corner of the street. He had been here the previous day enquiring about the long-awaited food parcel from Switzerland, and he knew the way up the stairs and down a couple of passages to one of the many offices in the "Good Samaritan" building. But, of course, the official whom he sought for was not yet back after the lunch pause; he was too early. There began the hanging about, the wait in dusty passages that he knew so well, pressed to the wall while men and women bustled past with an air of persistent activity. 1

The strength of the passage lies in its cumulative quality, its extension of bad circumstances into worse that give it a sense of inevitability, hopelessness, and duration. So, the landscape is ruined, snow-covered, and the snow itself is associated with darkness and a sort of stealth since it has fallen in the night.[2] The man is first 'tall, thin' then 'loose, lanky' and then becomes assimilated into his coat, the worn condition of which suggests a perpetual winter. At first he is 'hanging about'; that becomes 'the wait' until, in a desperate condition he is 'pressed to the wall' both literally and figuratively. At that point, too, his outsidership is confirmed. Although he began as 'the

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 7.
2 Compare this with The Pillar of Cloud, p. 19, where Lisette's prayer is 'Save us from the shadows of death and the demons that fly by night.'

tall, thin man' he was quickly redefined as a 'foreigner' and finally he is dehumanized, an object, 'pressed to the wall while men and women bustled past'. That the passage proceeds from movement to inaction produces a sense of endlessness; this is increased since at the opening the man is moving past the static ruins while at the end other people are passing the unmoving man. It is as though he has been absorbed into the ruins with which the novel opens; the snow covering them chills him through his thin covering; both are unmoving, hopeless, and neither have anything in common with the 'large undamaged building'. Two realities, the reality of the ruined, snow covered landscape and the reality of the hungry, cold man interpenetrate, not so much as symbols of each other, although that sense can be found in them, but as simple, reflected conditions: the condition of the ruined town and of the isolated man who lives in it. That the condition of isolation and hunger is not shared by everyone - there are officials who are active, bustling and who have a 'lunch pause', and buildings which are undamaged - increases by contrast the surrounding suffering and destruction. War is not a symbol here, but a savagely realistic absorption of life and hope which reduces man to a simple search for survival in an all-pervasive desolation. As Dominic expresses it to himself, 'In this place and time of famine and desolation every man was an enemy. And it was this that gave such an atmosphere of hopelessness to the ruined towns'.[1]

The realities of survival are expressed by the constant need to find food. All of Dominic's being is directed towards this, even against his will, since he is overtaken by desire for it:

> In the nights, the lust for food took hold of him and there was no escape from it. He lay prostrate in the darkness and hungered for the fruits of the earth with a burning, sensual longing out of which were spun feverish, almost palpable visions of food. He had never so longed

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 8.

for a woman. Hunger was lodged in his innermost bowels like a fire there that must be fed if it was not to consume him and waste him away.

There was a terror in these visions of food, in these dreams. Their sterility was a kind of nightmare. It even seemed to him that the more he was possessed by these visions, the longer the day on which he would receive a parcel would be postponed. All this ghostly food by which the nights were haunted seemed to him in his feverish vigil to bode evil for his chance of soon feeling the blessed weight of solid food in his hands. 1

The desire for food is not fully slaked until the end of the novel, when food parcels arrive from Uncle Egan and Dominic and Halka can look forward to a winter of plenitude in their room. As this suggests, the physical reality of need for food is elaborated into a spiritual need as well. This is hinted at in the passage where the language of religion is used to describe his hunger: 'the fruits of the earth', 'vision', 'blessed'. Spiritual desire is linked with sensual desire too, since hunger is 'a burning sensual longing' but in a use of motif which has been noted elsewhere in Stuart's work, the experience of sensuality is deflected from sexuality. In the simplest terms, this deflection is the result of Dominic's hunger; but more complexly, hunger unites sensual and spiritual to produce an image of redemption, 'the blessed weight of solid food in his hands'.[2] The symbol is produced from the reality of hunger, from its direct experience, and this extends the key difference between this depiction of war and that of the earlier novels. Before 1939 wartime settings had supplied a symbolic base from which reality could be revalued. In The Pillar of Cloud war itself is used as a base from which symbol, motif, theme and aesthetic can be revalued and developed. Dominic expresses this insight which the experience of war has given him in an image of blindness - thinking of his breakfasts

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 10.

2 A similar comparison might be made between the tin stove which fails at the start of the novel (p. 13-14) and the iron stove, symbolic of their security as well as providing heating and cooking facilities which Dominic and Halka have in their room at the end of the novel. (p. 231).

before the war he says 'But then it was nothing. All those good simple things were as nothing. Then I was blind'.[1] At the start of the novel he is struggling to reshape his thinking and understanding, to live by the insights he has gained. When his cheap tin electric stove breaks:

> He knew that what he must do was simply to take up the still hot, cheap little contrivance, put it away in the corner, and creep back into bed. But, no, he could not leave it at that. He wanted to force events into another shape; his will was set against the quiet and humble acceptance of his present lot, which his heart knew as the only course of wisdom. He immediately began to tinker at the stove. 2

At this point his self is divided into 'will' and 'heart', the rational certainty that it must be possible in mechanical terms to repair the stove and the instinctive knowledge that somehow to try to do so would be quite wrong, an attempt in a small way to avoid the suffering to which he has voluntarily exposed himself and thus an attempt by one part of his self to thwart the search for insight which the other part of his self is prosecuting. In fact, he does repair the stove, ripping it open to do so, and it breaks again almost immediately. The search for unity of self takes place throughout the novel. In a sense there are two Dominics, the Dominic who lived in Ireland and who was blind and the Dominic living in Berlin who seeks insight. The links between them are an interpenetration of symbol and realism; the description of catching and eating fish which Dominic gives to Lisette links Ireland and Berlin, the one redefining the other:

> 'There are several ways of eating,' he told her, 'though now we only know one way, that of gobbling down all we can get. But it was not like that. Our little meal was very solemn and ceremonious . . . Before we began to eat, he made the sign of the Cross over the grilled fish. We drank the rest of the whisky and eat the fish.'
> 'Without being hungry?' Lisette asked. Not to be hungry; on that

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 12.
2 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 14.

she had to ponder a while. To eat without being hungry; that was beyond her. How would food taste if you weren't hungry?

'That eating of the fish we had caught ourselves was a kind of ceremony. It had nothing to do with hunger. It was a consummation.' 1

The sacramental nature of the fish eating was deliberate at the time of the ceremony: but it is only now, in Berlin, that its true significance can be felt. Because Lisette cannot imagine what it is to eat without hunger the fish-eating becomes more sublime, more mysterious, an esoteric experience beyond its original nature. This both revalues the original experience and gives it a heightened significance in the context of Berlin; the Ireland-Dominic enacted a scene with an inkling of its meaning which the Berlin-Dominic can now appreciate in full. That which was symbolic in Ireland, a spiritual hunger and feeding, is vitally connected with reality in war-time Berlin and because of its connection with the real hunger the spiritual hunger takes on a greater meaning, at once more tangible and more mystical. The relationship between Dominic, Halka and Lisette reflects something of this. The two sisters might be seen as two halves of one whole which Dominic must experience to find his own integration: Lisette is almost totally wordly with her concentration on physical hunger and desire for physical lovemaking, and Halka is so unconcerned with the physical world as to not care whether she lives or dies, and is revolted by its cruel assaults on her. Dominic's legal and physical marriage to Lisette leads to a spiritual marriage with Halka and thus to his redemptive experience. As Ireland and Berlin combine and spiritual and physical hunger combine so Halka and Lisette may be seen to combine to produce a united self of Dominic. The war experience, its hunger and suffering and his knowledge of Lisette and Halka are all part of the process by which Dominic loses his blindness and finds redemption. So, his

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 19-20.

suffering initiates the process and his selfless marriage to Lisette is an expression of his redemption:

> It was her innocence before which he was humbled and through which he was purified and redeemed . . . he knew that at last the final traces of his old blindness had been lifted from him. All that he had suffered had been the beginning of his redemption of heart, but Lisette had been its consummation. [1]

The relationship with Halka when he is in prison, and her forgiveness of Radek the torturer, provides the link with universal salvation which is the final point of departure in the redemptive process. Dominic realises that 'her's was the innocence of which he had spoken, the unfathomable innocence that was on the earth to set over against the monstrous evil'.[2] The two women, therefore, represent the two evils of the war setting, its physical deprivation and misery, and 'the monstrous evil', the insensate, all-pervasive, massive destructiveness of the war machine.

Dominic must find a solution to both the mundane and the spiritual forces, if he is to find redemption. At the end of the novel, therefore, the room where he and Halka live is a refuge from the destroyed alien landscape with which the novel opens; there is food in plenty from Uncle Egan in Ireland; and an iron stove replaces the tin one. The spiritual potency which surrounds them, though, comes from the dead Lisette. After her death, Dominic:

> saw the short arc that the life of Lisette had been against the dark background of the night in which she had lived. He saw the purity of the line of her flight through the darkness; he had a glimpse of her being and then again it was lost to him in details.
>
> But for a moment, as he had a glimpse of her rising and setting, he saw her as she had been, shining with her own fleeting light. And he was touched in his spirit and humbled before her. He knelt there and

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 198.
2 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 223.

for a moment knew Lisette and knew himself with a pure flash of knowledge, and it was before her he was kneeling, at her feet. 1

Lisette has become the 'woman-Christ'; her wordly suffering has been transformed into spiritual power in a reversal of roles, as Halka's 'unfathomable innocence' develops into a fruitful life in the mundane world. Not only do the two women's powers combine to produce Dominic's redemption but the exchange of powers or identities between them leads to their own mutual redemption. This is stated clearly by Halka and imaged by the falling star at the end of the novel:

> The night was clear and over the black silhouette of the hills the stars were shining. Halka stopped on the road.
> 'You know, long ago Lisette had a picture of a saint, a young girl, to whom she used to pray. And afterwards she told me that it was half to me that she prayed, because for a long time I was a kind of guardian angel to her. And now the roles are reversed. Only I don't know if I dare speak to her. If I could speak to her I would say: "Lisette, give me a sign, only one sign that in the midst of all the darkness you hear me".'
> Dominic was silent. They stood on the track, and below them there was the sound of the stream flowing over pebbles. Then there was a fleeting stream of vivid light across the sky as a star fell. They waited a moment longer and then they walked on down the road towards the village, from where they would get a tram home. 2

The novel ends with a powerful evocation of the sense of redemption towards which it has been driving, but without any explicit statement about the moral nature of the redemptive experience. The description of the shining stars against the blackness of the hills picks up the dark and light images which recurr in the novel and it is tempting to equate the pure, distant starlight with the 'unfathomable innocence' of redemption and the black hills with 'the monstrous evil'. To do so, though, is to ignore the complexity of Stuart's idea of redemption. The Pillar of Cloud is concerned with investigating the relationship

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 230.
2 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 232.

between good and evil, guilt and innocence: this is clear in the different natures of Halka and Lisette, in the series of contrasts made in the novel, and in statements such as Dominic's to Frau Arnheim:

> 'can we really go on speaking of innocence any more?' Dominic exclaimed. 'That might have had some meaning when life was so sheltered and secure that the only way a woman had to express innocence of heart was by her modesty and virginity. But innocence has a more real sense than that. Aren't they innocent who have suffered without guilt, who bear the marks of violence on their flesh? . . . The bodies of women that have been purified in the fire of prison camps, of torment, of bombings, of hunger and cold, they have achieved an innocence that goes far deeper than the old one.' 1

The falling star encapsulates that sense of innocence interpenetrating with isolation, suffering and rejection. It is a vivid light, much brighter than the glimmering stars' light; it is momentary while they are permanent; it lights up the darkness which they only faintly illumine; and its sudden, brilliant statement is made at the expense of its own life, in a self-illuminating, self-purifying annihilation which yet brings hope and truth to others, who express its cosmic radiance in simpler, mundane forms which appear here as the action of returning to a shared place of warmth and security - going home.

The war in The Pillar of Cloud is not an affair of bombing or fighting since its action takes place in a post-war setting. Not a single shell falls throughout the novel. Rather, it is a background of physical destruction and spiritual desolation and the real battle is for survival on both levels. Dominic's final redemption is not by means of applying a simple formula but by experiencing desolation, hunger, imprisonment and continuing to struggle for self-realisation. Stuart presents several alternative courses of action in the novel - the clutching on to lost standards of Frau Arnheim, the anarchists supported

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 194.

by Captain Renier, the easy black-marketeering of Descoux, for example - but none of them can do more than offer physical survival. Even Petrov, who believed that the war was a sort of Day of Judgement which would usher in a new spiritual order, and who kept his faith in this throughout the duration, is finally embittered and disillusioned:

> As long as he had lived in the glow of a vision of a mysteriously ordered world, where all had its hidden reason and purpose, where whosoever sowed in tears would reap in joy and where no sparrow fell to the earth 'without the Father,' then all could be borne. Then there was a secret patience strengthening him.
>
> But now when he was face to face with another vision of the world, in which all was betrayed for a few good meals and a pair of silk stockings, where not only a sparrow but a few million men could perish, many of them in torment, without there being the slightest sign of any paternal spirit in the whole empty cosmos, every evidence of the misery in which he lived was horrible to him. [1]

Petrov's problem is that he has concentrated too much on the externals of spiritual experience without trying to understand its fundamental nature and assimilate himself into it. He has 'attended lectures by the Witnesses of Jehovah, by the Latter-Day Saints, by Theosophists'[2] and naively 'he wanted a woman who had suffered, who had been tempered and made patient, and together they would read the poems of these young French writers and walk in the hills and watch the sunsets and the night heavens'.[3] His romantic assumptions about the nature of spiritual growth and the insights to which suffering can lead blind him to its real significance and effectively cut him off from the redemptive experience. By contrast, Dominic has deliberately courted suffering and imprisonment because of his belief that 'the fighting with weapons wasn't the only part of this war . . . I began to see that it was out of

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 172-3.
2 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 171.
3 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 171-2.

pain and suffering that, if there was to be a new peace, it would be shaped . . . it was obvious to me that if I was to remain outside the great stream of suffering that was flowing across Europe, if I had no real part in it, then I might as well have remained at home in Ireland in comfort and security'.[1]

It is the battle against the divided self, the struggle against the enemy within for spiritual understanding and self-realisation, that Dominic undertakes, a personal reconstruction which uses the upheaval and disorder of the war as a means to this end. The war provides the suffering through which redemption can be found, an interpenetatation of reality and symbol which gives new meaning to the mundane, and a confusion of accepted moral, social and spiritual values which allows their reordering and reassessment. This can be carried out only on a personal level, however, for it is not Stuart's hero's part to apportion blame to others or to join any consensus, whether political, like Renier's anarchists, or spiritual, like Petrov's lecture-groups.

In both Redemption and The Flowering Cross war is viewed retrospectively, through memory. This means that the experience has been absorbed, that its historical reality has been more obviously defined as a personal reality, and its actuality can be re-used and restated in symbolic terms. Again, its function is to provide a situation in which the hero is exposed to suffering, through which he can find redemption. In Redemption, the real war becomes transfigured into a nightmarish Armageddon, with the two almost identityless opposing armies abstracted into giant warring forces rather than a battle between men:

The army Wenck was the name of all that was known and familiar, the

1 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 46.

familiar pain, the familiar ruins and the familiar hunger and the small familiar joys and securities still left amid the ruins and the hunger. And the other names were the names of death, of the angel of death, of Astoreth, and they had the sound of the last trumpet. [1]

The sense of an almost surreal finality is increased by Amos's description of the 'death' of the landscape, the removal of identity not only from people but also from the place where they live and move, so that its condition mirrors theirs, in a conjunction of realism and symbol. He says 'The street was being stripped of its own light and its own darkness and it lay there like the dead lie, without the halo of their own beings around them any more, exposed'.[2] This image of the supine street prefigures that of Margareta 'sprawled out on my belly like a rat in a trap'[3] underlining the need for both experiences, that of suffering and destruction and that of the mystical power of womanhood for Ezra to find redemption. His wartime life has given him an insight into suffering, but it is not brought to fruition until the return of Margareta, just as Dominic's suffering was sterile without the activating force of Lisette and Halka. Similarly, in The Flowering Cross, Louis has gained a great deal of insight in general terms about the nature of love, 'the solace there is in women, not in any particular woman, but in womanhood'.[4] However, this understanding is not fruitful until it is personalised, concentrated in Alyse and his relationship with her, through which the personal experience of womanhood and its absolute, eternal qualities are united. As in The Pillar of Cloud, such insights, or the redemptive experience, are not granted easily and to everyone. Like Petrov, Polensky in The Flowering Cross has found only a deeper more arid desolation in his experience of isolation so that when

1 Redemption, p. 41.
2 Redemption, p. 40.
3 Redemption, p. 225.
4 The Flowering Cross, p. 44.

he commits suicide 'he had come to the end of everything'[1] and the gun he uses 'was as much dead dust as anything else, as the nipple of a woman's breast, as the opening beak of the singing bird'.[2] In Redemption, after hearing Ezra's account of the war, Father Mellowes is overcome by a similar desolation in which his prayers 'sounded to himself a senseless growling'[3] although this state is later succeeded by an insightful one in the small community he sets up. Petrov, Polensky, and Father Mellowes in that state are emblematic of the sterility and destructiveness of the war, its potential to destroy not only the physical world - that hardly matters - but to destroy the soul, to remove all hope and belief. Because of this, the significance of war spreads outside its immediate historical context to join with any forces which are deadening or sterile. Stuart's concentration on post-war settings rather than giving an account of the war itself is immediately understandable, therefore, in terms of his intention to universalize the experience, to use it as a means of discussing man's condition in a broader sphere, and thus to develop further the idea of redemption which is crucial to his aesthetic.

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Unlike these three earlier novels, however, Victors and Vanquished seems to be more concerned with narrating the events of the war from the point of view of one who had witnessed it in Germany. Again, though, a comparison with Black List, Section H is illuminating. Just as Black List, Section H presented a rather different set of 'facts' from those in Things To Live For so it gives a substantially different account of the hero's war-time experiences. Luke Cassidy, in Victors and Vanquished, fortuitously 'adopts' a baby, Loulou, on his way to Germany;

1 The Flowering Cross, p. 173.
2 The Flowering Cross, p. 174-5.
3 Redemption, p. 169.

when there he is involved with members of the IRA; later, he visits a number of prisoner-of-war-camps in a semi-official capacity. None of these events occur to Luke Ruark in Black List, Section H, however, and this underlines the impossibility of treating the novels as a source of biographical material. This is not to deny the right of Stuart's creative imagination to select from his own experience and to reshape selected events into other forms: rather, it is to affirm that this is precisely what he does and that for this reason objective 'facts' should not be sought in imaginative fiction. This is emphasised when the experiences of other heroes are considered as well, of course, since the actions and experiences of all of them differ in some way from the others. It is even more acute when comparison is made with what is known of Stuart's own experiences in Berlin. Then, it is clear that the character Nellan in Victors and Vanquished, who has been 'released from a Franco prison', who had 'held a high rank . . . in the International Brigade' and was 'an IRA leader' is based on Frank Ryan; like Ryan, he is deaf, and like Ryan he returns from an attempt to land an IRA leader in Ireland (O'Donoghue in the novel; Sean Russell in real life) which fails when the leader dies en route. Indeed, the authoritative historical account of Ryan's period in Germany and his death is that provided by Stuart in his two articles in The Bell.[2] However, the gap

1 Victors and Vanquished, p. 107-8.

2 'Frank Ryan in Germany' and 'Frank Ryan in Germany: Part II'. See Sean Cronin, Frank Ryan (Dublin, 1980) for acknowledgement of Stuart's authority. The inclusion of Black List, Section H in the Bibliography of Frank Ryan and the omission of Victors and Vanquished from it is clearly an error. A comparison of other accounts of Ryan's period in Germany with the accounts given in The Bell by Stuart show that they are derivative of his work. See, for example, Enno Stephan, Spies in Ireland, translated by A. Davidson (London, 1963)(first published as Geheimauftrag Irland, Hamburg, 1961); Tim Pat Coogan, The I.R.A. (Oxford, 1970). It is interesting to note that although the British Foreign Office were able to trace the report of Ryan's death which appeared in The Times, 24 February 1945 back to a report in Irish Press, 23 February 1945, they could not identify the original source of information. See Public Record Office, F0371-4957-Z1843.

and fiction, which here seems at first so minimal, is suddenly widened by the description of Nellan's death which is quite different from Ryan's: 'Nellan was killed in a railway accident . . . What makes the affair all the more unlucky is that he was on his way to Switzerland en route to Ireland'.[1] There is no mention of Nellan or Ryan in Black List, Section H; there the crucial actions of H are his broadcasts from Germany, which, conversely, do not appear in Victors and Vanquished.

Both novels live the war experience anew, and quite differently. The correspondences which seem important - the wife and child left behind in Ireland, the lecturing post at Berlin University, difficulties in getting a visa to leave Ireland for the Continent - are important only as jumping-off points. What is important are the central concerns of the two novels, the examinations of guilt and innocence through the medium of the Jewish characters in Victors and Vanquished and of the growth of an artist's mind in Black List, Section H. The correspondences that should be sought are the three crucial incidents which all five novels share: the war setting; the woman through whom redemption is revealed; and the period of imprisonment which ratifies the heroes' redemptive experience. In Victors and Vanquished the violent, mindless destruction of the war is conveyed through the novel's focus on the persecution of Myra's family and especially her old, wise father, Isaak. Cassidy asks Nellan 'What is there here to temper the worst cruelties? Nothing! That's what is so terrible',[2] and the quest is to find something to set against that. As in the earlier novels it is the war itself which gives him the first inkling of the solution. Myra tells him of a conversation between herself and Isaak:

> 'The other day, I forget how we got on to the subject, he said: "I

1 Victors and Vanquished, p. 243.
2 Victors and Vanquished, p. 135.

gave you the gift of life, Myrele, and it's a great gift; I'm still learning how great it is. But there's a greater one, and that's death"'.

It increased Luke's apprehension in regard to Isaak, this growing concern of his with death, which he had noticed too.

'The gift of death, as you call it, is something anyone can give,' I told him. 'Any of those brutes of Gestapo can bestow it right and left'. "Oh no, they can't", Papa said, "no more than life is given by an act of rape. Mo more than the gift you get from a loved one far away has to do with the delivery van that brings it to your door."' [1]

The meaning of this is not revealed to Luke until the death of Loulou; unlike his own child, Dolores, who died of spinal meningitis without him caring, when Loulou dies in his arms there is 'a moment of unique understanding between them'.[2] On Jim Tracey's boat, the 'ancient, ark-like craft'[3] which symbolises a new spiritual life, 'the abiding presence of beauty, other than passion'[4] is made credible to Luke. So, the two apparently opposite gifts of life and death are reconciled in the recognition that what lies at their hearts is the same, a sympathy which can make death a uniting rather than a separation and which carries a sense of eternal, calm beauty. Luke's understanding of this, like Dominic's, Ezra's and Louis's, takes place through his love for the heroine and he turns all of his energies to the protection of Myra. This is ramified by the period Luke spends in prison, in which he realises that 'the nature of imagination demanded the very widest swing of the pendulum of experience. The farther he was carried away from the light of creation into the darkest, vilest recesses, the truer, if he ever came back, would be his vision'.[5] The war itself has receded into the background here as it does in the other novels, to allow a fuller examination of other, more central concerns. Victors and Vanquished is tantalising in that it appears to give a lot of information about life

1 Victors and Vanquished, p. 201-2.
2 Victors and Vanquished, p. 211.
3 Victors and Vanquished, p. 224.
4 Victors and Vanquished, p. 226.
5 Victors and Vanquished, p. 237.

in wartime Germany while really concerning itself with the inner workings of its protagonist, and its success in maintaining and balancing these two levels of meaning is doubtful. The war is neither so absorbed into the hero's being as to develop a symbolic value, nor so concerned with reportage that is has any real documentary value, outside vignettes such as that of the minority revolutionary groups seeking German support.[1] This is reflected by the uneasy style of its ending, changing from third person narrative to first person diary entries and back to third person narrative again. The novel lacks integration and in a sense this is a strong argument against the idea that Stuart is concerned to record events of the war in his fiction since the closer he comes to doing that, the less he succeeds in the real creativity which is the ultimate object of fiction.

Black List, Section H, the 'imaginative fiction in which only real people appear', is the strongest contender for the name of autobiographical novel, and indeed, it is generally given this name by reviewers and critics. It was not Stuart's intention to write autobiography, however. At a reading given at the National Poetry Centre, London on 12th February 1980, the programme entry for Francis Stuart stated 'In 1971 he published his autobiographical Black List, Section H'.[2] Before Stuart gave his reading, the presenter of the occasion informed the audience that the entry was incorrect, and that Mr Stuart wished the audience to understand that Black List, Section H was a novel, not an autobiography.[3] Again, the setting of the novel is in the real, identifiable world; in this case, the central character's relationship with W. B. Yeats, Maud Gonne, and Liam O'Flaherty and his marriage to Iseult Gonne, encourage identification with Stuart himself.

1 See Victors and Vanquished, p. 123-4; the scene is ironic in tone.
2 The National Poetry Centre, A Sense of Ireland: The Literary Programme (3 February - 9 March 1980),p. 11.
3 The British National Library Sound Archives, NSAT4185WR (C/15/6).

Such identification can only be made in the terms used by Anthony Cronin, though, who says that:

> while there are ways of synthesising fact which may be valid and also valid ways of transferring fact to the fictional plane, they are not the same thing and do not mix. Stuart is, however, concerned with breaking down the barriers between art and life. 1

This interlinking of art and life has been seen to be a crucial part of Stuart's aesthetic and a major theme in his work as well as the principle function of biographical material. Life provides the basis on which art can be built, the reality from which symbol can develop, not to leave life but to energise it and extend its significance.

In Black List, Section H, as in Things To Live For and The Pillar of Cloud, war is only a part of the other realistic detail against which the hero operates. In the case of the Civil War this is realised much more clearly than in Things To Live For and is emphasised by the importance placed on the internal development of H rather than his relationship with the Republican forces. This explains the two different accounts of capture, for example: in Things To Live For the hero was being defined in terms of the part he played in the war and his actions were necessarily gallant ones. In Black List, Section H, however, there is a deliberate attempt to show that H does not really fit in with that sort of consensus and this is emphasised by his unheroic capture. Similarly, in Things To Live For, the hero 'lay in bed all day for weeks reading. What I read I don't remember' while in Black List, Section H H reads The Brothers Karamazov with his cell mate and:

1 Heritage Now, p. 162.
2 Things To Live For, p. 46.

> At lights out, when they came to discuss the day's events, which meant those in the novel in which they were involved far more deeply than in the almost imperceptible prison ones, they marvelled together, comparing notes, at the vast range of emotions, whose impact was overwhelming on their impressionable young consciousness, from the most murderous, lecherous, cynical, to those at the inner heart of peace, faith, and holiness. 1

The period spent by H in Berlin is seen in similarly personal terms, each action being taken deliberately to further what the narrator calls 'the legend of H'.[2] This is stressed by the interrelationship between the vital experiences of the novel. When H falls ill in Germany, his feverish hallucinations bring before him Keats, the heroine of Tolstoy's Redemption, and the filly he bought in Ireland:

> He could sink into the anonymity and obscurity of illness, sweat, ache, shiver, drink the cool Saft - had Keats's tubercular fever inspired the lines that had already been haunting H the day before? - and give himself to the hallucinations he felt were on the way.
>
> Sure enough, when he was back in bed with the covers over his face and two of the opened bottles, one half-emptied, beside him on the floor, he received a startling image of the wet black lips of the filly, curling back from strong teeth, as she tried to nip him while he was saddling her. On her other side he recognized, with an even greater thrill, Maslova with her slight squint and small energetic hands . . .
>
> 'There now! And I cried when I was sentenced. Instead of thanking God for it all the days of my life,' Katusha was telling him, speaking across the filly's hollow back.
>
> He himself had not yet been sentenced. It depended on the outcome of the race. If the filly won he would be allowed to walk beside the girl prisoner all the way from Perm to their final destination . . . But had not he sometimes had an intimation, on the racecourse, and at other moments, that what he was risking was merely a token of what was really at stake? . . .
>
> 'Yes, Lubka (another diminutive of her name that he astonishingly recalled), you have the resolution to turn pain to good account. Show me how I can do so, too. It's something I can learn from spirits such as yours.' 3

The war is seen as a way of isolating H, as the fever isolates him. By being in Germany, especially by agreeing to write propaganda,

1 Black List, Section H, p. 94.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 277.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 289.

H is 'turning from the busy street to slink with thieves and petty criminals down dim alleys, leaving the lawful company to which he'd belonged'[1]; further, he is seeking 'a sudden jerk forward of consciousness, especially as expressed in poetry and fiction, which he began to sense might only take place after a new political or social cataclysm'.[2] The upheaval of the war, like the hallucinations of the fever, might lead to new insights, new ways of seeing things in the context of each other. The hallucination combines all of these elements: the isolation, the sense of risking all on one chance, the criminality implicit in the idea of him being sentenced. At the same time it reverses their normal moral values. If H is sentenced by the lawful society as Katusha has been sentenced then he will join her criminal ranks and through this, 'turn pain to good account'. The risks taken on the racecourse, the risks taken by his actions in Germany, all are 'merely a token of what was really at stake' and that is the development of his spiritual insight and artistic consciousness.

The movement between reality and symbol which was not successful in Victors and Vanquished is expedited in Black List, Section H by the use of a series of personae. The central character of the novel is more obviously a divided person than Dominic was in The Pillar of Cloud since he identifies himself by two names, H and Luke Ruark. The mechanics of this in the novel are simple: the narrator calls his hero H, and the hero thinks of himself by that name; his relatives call him 'Harry' which explains the provenance of the initial. When he becomes friendly with Iseult Gonne, however, she calls him Luke since she 'had chosen to call him by his second name'.[4] The significance of the different identities is increased in complexity as the novel proceeds. H is the

1 Black List, Section H, p. 311.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 286.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 2.
4 Black List, Section H, p. 17.

'real' self of the hero, the person he knows he is, the person he wants to be: the name is a private one, used only by the narrator and H himself although the public identity of H is variable. To some of his milieu he is 'Harry', the poor scholar and difficult son; to Iseult he is Luke, the deliberate change of name indicating her investiture of him with a special identity which she expects him to fulfil; later in the novel, in London Honore calls H 'Stephen' and when H tells her 'My name's Luke' she replies 'I know it is, my sweet, but I'm going to call you Stephen'.[1] These are public identities, however, masks behind which H finds a series of different experiences, all of which have a different degree of commitment but none of which represent a final commitment. Harry, then, is the persona who writes the letter supporting Home Rule with which the novel opens, through 'an instinct, far from conscious, to cut himself off from the world of his cousins once for all'.[2] The letter is unsuccessful in this, however; it is mentioned to Harry casually by his stepfather and his Aunt Jenny, the latter preserving it 'with newspaper clippings about her prize heifers, in the empty half of her silver cigarette case'.[3] This first persona is naive in almost every way possible and much of the humour of the early part of the novel, as well as much of its intensity, results from his attempts to break through this naivety to some real experience. This seems to come initially at an at home at Maud Gonne's house, where H meet Iseult and later asks her to go for a walk with him. At this point in the novel, the persona of Harry gives way to the persona of Luke. It is no closer to the private H than Harry was, however. Indeed, Luke is even more distanced since in his attempts at maturity he rejects his own, gauche world in favour of an artificial, fantasy one:

1 Black List, Section H, p. 189.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 2.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 3.

he'd made a false move right at the start. He had placed his beloved in an unreal, Yeatsian world, instead of trying to take her into his which, however immature, was a very different one. [1]

The tenderness of the comment, the sense of regret which it carries, pervades the relationship between Luke and Iseult. On the one hand Luke is glad to accept the role of poet which Iseult bestows on him, but on the other hand he is obliged to try to force his way out of the Yeatsian world and into his own, at whatever cost.

This is made clear in his first discussion with Iseult about poetry in which he states 'Dishonor is what becomes a poet, not titles or acclaim . . . A poet must be a countercurrent to the flow around him. That's what poetry is: the other way of feeling and looking at the world'.[2] Iseult, however, is firmly rooted in the Yeatsian world and Luke's escape from it must be a parting from her also, as she poignantly realises even at this early stage. She tells him 'I'm the willow rooted on the river bank and you're the black swan gliding past'.[3]

The diminishing of the Luke persona is concurrent with H's own development. One point in it is his relationship with Honore Maxwell, the first time in the novel that sexual experience is both pleasurable and liberating. There the inviolate nature of his private self and the transitory nature of his personae is summed up in his unspoken thought 'Let her call him what she bloody well liked as long as she let him explore this situation, that he'd evaded so long, in his own sweet time and way'.[4] It is with the writing of his second novel, however, that H begins to reunite the public world and his private fantasy world, and drive towards a greater degree of individuation. He achieves this by the creation of a persona for himself rather than a persona imposed by

1 Black List, Section H, p. 16.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 17.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 18.
4 Black List, Section H, p. 189.

others, through which he can explore certain situations imaginatively which are based in real life. The hero of the novel is 'A young man, H (alias X)' who while walking through the town early one Sunday morning, 'finds a couple of girls standing by the church railings and at first doesn't take in the fact of the placards, the shaven heads, and the chained wrists'.[1] The two girls recall a real incident of which H hears much earlier in the novel and which he invests with a special significance:

> The other day H had heard that a couple of girls, with heads shaved, had been found one Sunday morning chained to the railings of a church in the local town, a notice pinned to them with the word 'Traitors' scrawled on it . . .
>
> The girls tied to the railings symbolized for H the poet who is exposed and condemned for his refusal to endorse the closed judgements and accept the categorical divisions into right and wrong that prevailed. If he survived the ordeal there would flow from the depths of his isolation fresh imaginative streams to melt the surrounding freeze-up. [2]

The real girls become symbol to H; he transmutes them into characters in an imaginative world; and because of his intimacy with X he can then return the insights found in the imaginary world to the real world which he occupies. That it is H's development which is most important here rather than the purely fictional extension of X is shown by the way in which H sees the relationship between himself and his characters: 'He spent much of his time in his room with his two fictional darlings for whom he had X rent a ramshackle bungalow'. Here, X becomes simply a device, a servant to H's wishes, which allows H's interpenetration of fact and fiction and his own participation in his imaginative world, becoming both creator and created. This dual role is implicit in H's view of his actions as creating 'the legend of H', the word 'legend'

1 Black List, Section H, p. 213.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 43-4.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 219.

suggesting a fictional development of something grounded in fact, something which is partly believable in an objective fashion, but totally believable only by uniting imagination and reality and entering willingly into a different world. The girls and X in the beach-hut live an almost fabulous life, in a sensual and sexual paradise. However, their situation is a re-working of H's own experiences with the two prostitutes in Paris and the tantalising prospect held out to him by Sean Lane when he is imprisoned, that if they had escaped, 'We'd have stayed with a couple of motts I know in Scotland Road'.[1] Further, though, the imaginary beach house provides H with the idea of a refuge, a physical equivalent to his private identity which will be kept free from the rubbish and untidiness of his and Iseult's home:

> H began to think more and more of a room in Paris or Vienna, an attic, say, that he'd keep neat and clean, perhaps in the Praterstrasse or the rue Delambre, not far from the Diana Bad, or alternatively, the Dôme. 2

It is through this intercalation of reality and imagination that H attempts to escape from the Yeatsian world, and to unite his divided self. His move from writing poetry to writing prose is in itself a part of this and as such it is condemned by Iseult, not because she considers it an inferior art but because she disapproves of the imaginative world which H creates:

> On the drive over the mountains she told H she regretted his having given up poetry for fiction. Not that this was news to him; he knew that she disapproved not just of what he'd have tried to alter had they been in accord in other ways, his selfishness and irresponsibility, but of what seemed to her the fatal course his imagination was set on. 3

1 Black List, Section H, p. 107
2 Black List, Section H, p. 220
3 Black List, Section H, p. 215-6.

H cannot find unity without leaving Iseult and all that their life together represents, and finally this can only be done by his going to Berlin. He has a premonition that something like this will be the case, that for him to find self-actualisation he must make some sort of complete break, after he and Iseult quarrel:

> Driving along the road out of the glen after one of their rows, H was aware of nerves he hadn't managed to pull up and take with him whose ends were still in touch with, and registering the familiar vibrations of, all he was leaving behind. He depressed the accelerator and shot the car forward up the incline in his effort to break away. He had a premonition that all this - the wrench, the pain, the anger, the flight - was a foretaste of what was coming in an irreversible form. He drove fast, his face set and stony, his heart torn between past and future. [1]

War in the novel, therefore, takes on a different role to war in history. As in Stuart's other novels of the post-war period it is a reality from which symbol can be derived, and applied to reality, thus extending it and providing insights about it. Since this method is crucial to the development of H's self, though, the war is seen more than ever as a catalyst for H, a flux which allows him to weld together his divided self. On his gun-running expedition in the Civil War, where H was concerned about realising his sexual potential, he buys some contraceptives and on the return journey to Ireland 'the idea of the French letters now took possession of him and they seemed as least as important as the guns'.[2] So, in Berlin, H sees the progress of war in terms of how it affects his artistic development. When war with Russia is announced, therefore:

> His first thought was that he'd never now stand at the corner of Sadovaya and Vosnesensky Streets or walk by the Fontanka canal where, on a mist-shrouded evening, Raskolnikov had entered the hotel to drink a

1 Black List, Section H, p. 221.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 78.

glass of tea and scan the paper for some mention of the crime.[1]

The relationship with Halka is the factor which allows him to release the various parts of his self, by providing a context in which his personae, or the experiences associated with them, can be assembled and come to terms with, by confiding them to her. So:

> He told her of his aunt's house by the bridge and the view at dusk from the upstairs window across the railway line and over the commons to the cluster of squat walls, still luminous, under tall columns of blue smoke-haze, and especially of the corner field flooded in rainy seasons, which, in retrospect, seemed to have been constant, where there was always a flock of starlings that rose in a black whirring wheel which, darker at the center, spun off crazily into the silvery evening; when he was homesick now, it was for this one field. [2]

The evocation of young manhood recalls the damp evening countryside with which the novel opens, when H writes the letter to the newspaper, and by so doing extends sympathetic understanding to the Harry personaa. That persona is a part of the affection with which the scene is recalled and through it is reaccepted and absorbed into H. The Luke persona is revisited and redefined in the reading of Keats which H and Halka share. This both presents an alternative to the false Yeatsian world which he and Iseult shared and recalls the incompatability of H and Iseult since it was when H was reading 'a volume marking the Keats Centenary'[3] that he gave help to a Black-and-Tan, an action which disgusted Iseult. While H could not identify with the poetic vision of Yeats, he is able to do so with Keats since he believes that 'like himself, Keats was aware of intellectual limitations, which in H's case amounted to certain blind spots'.[4] The experience with Halka, then, parallels that with

1 Black List, Section H, p. 357.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 357.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 42.
4 Black List, Section H, p. 367.

Iseult, and through its fruitfulness relocates the poet Luke persona in the consciousness of H. This is made clear by the fact that Halka 'called him Luke either when sulky or at moments like this, when she was really thinking of something else. At other times she had other names, biblical ones, and all sorts of endearments for him'.[1] The Luke persona is not destroyed but relegated to an exterior, insignificant identity in favour of another one which is more complex, many-facetted, but which, because the 'other names' are not given has to be regarded as being represented simply by 'H' and thus as providing a true understanding of him. Equally important for all three personae, Harry, Luke and Stephen, is their sexual identities: for Harry, sex was a barely understood mystery; for Luke, a constant source of conflict with Iseult; while Stephen and Honore's mutual fear and desire was the only meeting point they had. With Halka, though, it is a joy, a shared pleasure which is entirely natural and which combines all levels of experience:

> After the second or third time with Halka it was as if they'd been lovemaking for years. She came in the late afternoons, between leaving the university and going to the Rundfunk, and as soon as they'd embraced, she took off her shoes and when he turned from locking the door was already stretched on the couch with her dress pulled up, delighting him by thus displaying the same impatience as his own. 2
>
> Back to the cold room and, hunger forgotten, into bed where her body became a sexual extension of the music and sensations were spiritual-sensual, sacred-obscene, complete as never before. 3

In his life with Halka, cut off from his compatriots in Ireland, H lives in a similar way to that he ascribed to X and by so doing brings both the integration of his personae and the movement from realism to symbol and back again, to completion. It is this integration that allows H to survive the separation from Halka and their imprisonment and to realise

1 Black List, Section H, p. 377.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 366.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 416.

the redemptive understanding he has found. That redemption was found through Halka, and through the development of an undivided self but H does not finally realise that he has achieved this until he understands that his imprisonment is simply a division between his past life and his future,[1] 'the deep divide between the past and what was still to come'. It is the achievement of his desire to 'cut himself off from the world of his cousins once for all',[2] the dishonour which he believed became a poet, the sentence which allows him to 'walk beside the girl prisoner all the way from the Perm to their final destination'.[3] The importance of the novel lies in this remarkable imaginative confluence of experience, and the way in which it defines and develops its central character. Its autobiographical background and its biographical structure are used as means of achieving this definition and cannot, therefore, be regarded as ends in themselves. As Anthony Cronin says, Stuart is 'concerned with breaking down the barriers between art and life' and under these circumstances, the query as to whether the work is fact or fiction is superfluous.

* * * * * * *

A similar judgement must be made on The High Consistory which also uses autobiographical material - boyhood at school and in Ireland, some details of the Civil War, a period in Germany - but which deliberately splinters the basis of biography, the chronological arrangement of events. As this might suggest, the uniting factor in the novel is imagination, which spans space and time to interlink people and places that would be unrelated in any other order of things. The easiest examples of what the narrator calls 'adapting a painter's technique to a simple recital of facts'[4] are Grimes's paintings: He spends the war in

1 Black List, Section H, p. 425.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 2.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 289.
4 The High Consistory, p. 25.

Germany waiting for his sitter after taking a commission for 'doing a portrait of Hitler'[1]; the work he does paint is quite different from that, however. At 6.30 pm on May 8th, 1945, in Dornbirn, Voralberg, Grimes begins:

> a still life: on a horse-hair sofa, covered with black American cloth, the one on which Emily Brontë, fully dressed, lay down to die, some splinters of old timber are displayed on a piece of yellowed newspaper, not, needless to say, relics of the true cross, but of some obscure and forgotten gallows, as well as a very worn and tattered pair of long women's boots, once red, worn by Katusha on the march to Siberia.
>
> I am painting the peace that has mysteriously and unexpectedly seeped into this 'Chamber of Sorrows', and modestly, tentatively, relate it to that which will slowly, gently emanate from the great store of anguish, despair and death, and transform us. [2]

The portrait of Hitler is painted at several removes, therefore. First, it is not Hitler himself but the upheaval of war-time Germany of which he is emblematic that is painted. Then, it is not the 'anguish, despair and death' of the war that the painter is concerned with, although its presence is implicit and acknowledged, but peace that will 'slowly, gently emanate' from it. Thirdly, though, that peace is approached indirectly, by associating it with the peace in the still-life: the items themselves are the relics of suffering; that suffering belongs to real life - Emily Brontë - to fiction - Katusha - and to the unknown, the victims of the 'obscure and forgotten gallows'. Further, it is a suffering which is accepted as Emily accepted her death, Katusha her sentence, and the unknown criminals their execution. The criminals are related to Christ by the denial that the wood is from the true cross which by contrast suggests that the truth about the cross is not that it is a sanctified 'relic' but that it is a gallows on which Christ suffered and died. This remarkable, imaginative depiction of the

1 The High Consistory, p. 24.
2 The High Consistory, p. 235.

quality of redemption, of the interlinked qualities of accepted suffering and peace, transcends the war experience by both universalising it and making it intimate.

The juxtapositioning of disparate times and people is one effect of the imaginative quality of the novel which works against the notion of its contents as being autobiographical. Another effect is that of invention. This is shown as affecting what might otherwise be simply memory when Grimes re-visits Berlin with a film-crew to make some sort of record of his period there:

> a leisurely stroll along Kurfürstendamm towards the back-tracking camera with the cigar-shaped microphone suspended from its horizontal arm just above my head, while I uttered my inner thoughts, as if to myself but in a clear enough tone to be heard above the traffic noise and the hum of passing pedestrian talk. At the same time I was to glance about me, neither too curiously which would detract from the suggestion of one part of me being deep in the past, nor too cursorily either, and of course taking no particular note if passed by a girl in a topless dress. [1]

Not only the vagaries of memory, but also the artificial environment distance the real experience of 1940's Berlin and make it clear that the 'inner thoughts' picked up by the microphone will not be that at all. This distortion, producing a fabrication of reality, is extended into pure invention in a way which is almost nihilistic. While trapped in a phone-booth by a rainstorm in August 1970 Berlin, Grimes recalls an incident which occured in Berlin in 1941, when his rooms were visited in his absence by two members of the Schutz Polizei who took one of his diary notebooks. Some time later, two men in civilian clothes, call on him and identify themselves as agents from the British 'Military Intelligence, Section 5'.[2] It is they who took the notebook diary and their concern is that Grimes will use his knowledge to affect the course

1 The High Consistory, p. 204.
2 The High Consistory, p. 207.

of the war:

- Have you already submitted your foreknowledge of what course the war will take to Hitler and perhaps Guderian?

It was evidently the idea of the great Panzer General getting word of these prophecies of mine, some already fulfilled, that worried them. In the intensity of the dream in which I'd been transported back into my old room in Berlin, Rankestrasse, I could use my hindsight from where I was 'in reality' to warn the Führer against, say, the planned invasion of Russia, as well as making other more positive suggestions of incalculable value to his prosecution of the war. 1

The boundaries between art and life are so blurred here as to suggest the possibility of the present reality intervening in past reality, in an interchange similar to that implicit in the still-life painting. This is not conceived of in any crude, science-fiction terms but as the power of imagination.

the imagination that in favourable circumstances creates alternative situations to those that take place in fact, and that have their own actuality that belongs to all the possible but unrealised events in any one life-time. 2

A similar 'alternative situation' is created by Grimes when he tries to pass on a gun to a former IRA Commandant, Brian O'Leary, so that it can be put to use. O'Leary is shocked and embarrassed: he tells Grimes 'Perhaps you haven't realised that I'm a TD now' [3] and finally arranges for the gun to be collected unobtrusively by the police. The alternative, imagined reality is of Grimes taking the same gun to Patrick Pearse. Pearse 'examined it cursorily but politely, as if it had no relevance for him . . . and then asked whether I considered he had a moral justification for calling the Rising and proclaiming the

1 The High Consistory, p. 208-9.
2 The High Consistory, p. 208.
3 The High Consistory, p. 193.

Republic'.[1] Pearse accepts that the gun and violence may be necessary but is deeply concerned about the moral issue; O'Leary, in rejecting the gun and focusing on his own situation is ignoring the moral issue of violence completely. It is not a question of whether Grimes agrees or disagrees with either side - the interview with Pearse leaves him depressed - but of willingness to confront issues in a fruitful way. War can provide an experience of suffering which is universal and personal and through it redemption may be found. On the other hand, it may also be used as a propagator of callous brutality and an egocentric, unthinking violence. O'Leary's horror at the gun is a mild form of this, hypocrisy and concern for his position rather than anything more sinister. In Memorial, however, Mullen the para-military leader who sets up the Hall of Freedom in the no-go area in the North, is totally, single-mindedly, dedicated to the violence of his cause. His is 'the fanatic, puritan mind',[2] and while Sugrue can appreciate its tendency towards excess, he cannot sympathise with its self-righteous violence: 'Mullen the daily communicant, Mullen the incorruptible extremist . . . He both chilled and attracted me.'[3] Grant and John-Joe in A Hole in the Head, are both paramilitaries, one from the Republic and the other from Ulster, and both are both types of insensate violence. They are mercenaries, fighting only for money: Grant is 'a blood-thirsty bastard. Gentle as a babe, though, compared to his companion'.[4] Again, it is not that Barnaby Shane is opposed to any particular political sphere but that he is concerned about the denial of all life-giving forces and experiences which he sees these sorts of obsessions as making. In reply to the question of whether he is opposed to both the security forces and the kidnappers, he says:

1 The High Consistory, p. 170.
2 Memorial, p. 188.
3 Memorial, p. 248.
4 A Hole in the Head, p. 190.

- I'm opposed, as you call it, to much more than that. I'm nauseated with the everlasting hypocrisies of every public figure and all authority everywhere. I've no special resentment against either the security forces or the guerillas, they have both been bemused into supposing they are defending something called 'law-and-order', 'liberty', 'Christian values', 'democracy' or whatever the local catchphrase is. Whereas there hasn't been anything, in the public sense, worth defending for a very long time.' [1]

The phrase 'in the public sense' is the key one. War is essentially a public occasion and the vision of Stuart's figures is essentially a private one. In his work, therefore, battlegrounds are viewed idiosyncratically and developed into part of a personal vision, with a significance which far outweighs, even works against, their public or historical significance. Artistically, they unite theme and motif with character and setting; aesthetically, they provide the situation in which life and art may be intertwined; spiritually, they supply the isolation, suffering and opportunity for redemption which is the quest of their central characters, and while the source of the material may be autobiographical, therefore, the content of the novels cannot be said to be the same.

The question of Stuart's own involvement in the war still remains, however. In Black List, Section H a British prisoner of war, Captain Manville, asks H about '"your own attitude, Mr Ruark, as expressed, tacitly but unmistakenly, in your coming here to Germany"'.[2] The conversation is an important one. H realises that to use Irish neutrality as an excuse for his presence is disingenuous, but refuses to justify his presence in moral terms, saying rather that it is 'here in the company of the guilty that with my peculiar and, if you like, flawed kind of imagination, I belong'.[3] Manville finds the answer unsatisfactory, saying 'I'd understand it if you told me you'd be at

1 A Hole in the Head, p. 198.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 330.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 331.

home among the defeated but surely not among these victorious brutes'.

To this, H has no answer:

> Captain Manville had touched a vital spot. If the setup here really triumphed, as seemed likely enough, H saw quite clearly by now that for himself it would mean inner disaster . . . In the case of a German disaster, which even then he didn't rule out, having thrown in his lot with the losing side would certainly turn out to be of immense value in his growth as an imaginative writer. Though being branded as a Nazi by those from whom most of his readers would have to come, scarcely argued well for his future, no matter how his work developed. 2

As it happens, H's choice is justified by the redemptive insight he finds there and by the reader's full understanding of his actions and the reasons for them. The reader knows that H's idea of victory is rather different from the generally accepted notion; that he is fleeing from an unbearable home life into one of the few jobs open to him; that the attitudes he showed in the Civil War are the attitudes he brings to this one; that he is motivated by an overwhelming, passionate urge to develop as an artist and that he will take any and every risk to do this. For these reasons, and because of the reader's complicity in them, actions such as H's broadcasts from Germany have a raison d'être which transcends their apparent significance. H, though, is a persona, a fictional creation, and the same conditions cannot be extended automatically to Stuart himself. Rather, it is necessary to ask what we know of why Stuart went to Germany and what his actions were there, before trying to judge the integrity of the relationship between work and author.

The problem still is that little factual information exists about Stuart's life. Reviewers and critics reiterate the few well-known facts of marriage to Iseult Gonne, imprisonment by the Free State, and a

1 Black List, Section H, p. 331.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 331.

sojourn in Germany as a means of giving their readers a sense of orientation rather than in an attempt to explore or extend his biography. The authoritative work on Stuart's life is still J. H. Natterstad's 85-page critical introduction, which is limited both by its length and its purpose of presenting an easily assimilable guide to novels and man. The constraints of the format of the series of which that work is a part means that sources of information are not footnoted and a full bibliography is not given, which makes it impossible to read information independently or to check conflicting accounts. For example, according to Enno Stephan's authoritative work, Spies in Ireland, Stuart 'not only lectured on Anglo-Irish literature at the university but also advised the German Foreign Office on Irish Affairs'[1]; no mention is made by Natterstad of the latter involvement.

Elsewhere, Natterstad's writing has tended to concentrate on what he sees as specific problems associated with Stuart's period in Germany. In one article, for example, he has dealt usefully with the question of whether or not Stuart's work shows an anti-Semitic feeling.[2] There, he notes that 'during the thirties Stuart's attitude towards the Jew was curiously ambivalent. On the one hand, he was capable of referring to a reviewer as "that Jewish scribbler" . . . at the same time there was something about this persecuted minority that drew Stuart to them'.[3] It should be noted, though, that Stuart's comment was made in a private letter to Joseph O'Neill about his novel Wind of the North and the full context of the phrase is:

> I don't think there is any fear of your book 'dying.' But I know how discouraging it is apt to be when the reviews do not come in. I should be rather shocked than otherwise if I saw you book praised by that

1 Spies in Ireland, p. 79.
2 J. H. Natterstad, 'Francis Stuart: From Laragh to Berlin', ICarbS, 4, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1978), 17-23.
3 'Francis Stuart: From Laragh to Berlin', p. 18.

Jewish scribbler Strauss. Nor can I share your respect for Gerald Gould as a critic although he has been kind enough to award me some bouquets at times, but someone who can discover 'masterpieces' with such frequency must have a somewhat unsober critical mind. [1]

In this context, almost any denigration of the reviewer would have done as well, since Stuart's intention is to offer sympathetic support to O'Neill at any cost; it is not a personal opinion in the usual sense, therefore - indeed, the comment may have been couched in terms which were more O'Neill's than Stuart's. A case might be made out, too, for suggesting that the epithet 'Jewish' was in common use in the Thirties, much as 'nigger' was in Mark Twain's period and that Stuart was being impolite but not expressing especial prejudice in his use of the term.[2] Both of these factors, the currency of the word at the period it was used, and the difficulty of knowing whose opinion the term reflects, are equally valid in the case of another apparently prejudiced comment by Stuart. In the one work of Stuart's published while he was in Berlin, Der Fall Casement, he refers to 'Lord Reading, der frühere jüdische Finanzmann Rufus Isaac';[3] but how far that is Stuart's phrase, or that of the translator, or whether it was an insertion demanded by the publishers, cannot be determined. What is clear, however, is the attitude to Jewishness present in Stuart's post-war novel Victors and Vanquished, written after the Jews had become a persecuted minority in a more real sense.[4] There, Jewishness is presented with great sympathy

1 National Library of Ireland, Letters to Joseph O'Neill 1934-35, (MS 8184).

2 It is interesting to note the appearance in the 1930's of works such as Basil Matthews, The Jew and the World Fement (London, 1934) which offer an apologia for Jewishness and rationalisation of it.

3 'Lord Reading, the former Jewish financier Rufus Isaacs'; Der Fall Casement, p. 71.

4 Stuart 'believed reports about death camps only when he was shown photographs by the French who arrested and held him for several months after the war' according to a short, unsigned article about him which appeared in Sunday Press. See 'Eighty Years With the Storm Troops of Life', Sunday Press, 18 April 1982, p. 23.

and sensitivity and if any balanced view of the issue is to be taken, this longer exposition with its certainty of attribution must outweigh slighter, less well-authenticated statements. Indeed, given the evidence of the pre-war novels, such as Julie and The Great Squire, since their Jewish characters show the vitality to take risks and the compassion to use their gains in helping others less fortunate, but not less sensitive, than themselves, there is little evidence to suggest that Stuart's work was as anti-Semitic as that of Eliot, for instance; and there is certainly no sign of the sort of virulence which appears in the work of Ezra Pound at that period.[1]

A more vexed question is that of finding objective verification for the events of the wartime period. In some cases it is possible to apply Occam's razor; when E. H. Cookridge in Secrets of the British Secret Service says of Stuart's broadcasts from Germany, 'Stuart became a minor Lord Haw-Haw, alternating with William Joyce in the insidious propaganda'[2] it is possible that in a work of this sort he makes the comparison for sensationalism and, perhaps, because both were of Irish descent. It is not likely that he is suggesting that their outputs or attitudes were the same, nor that Joyce's broadcasts were aimed at a mainly Irish audience as Stuart's were. Since the few speeches that Stuart wrote for Joyce apparently were unacceptable[3] it is unlikely that Cookridge is seriously implying any large-scale collaboration between Stuart and Joyce, especially since the published transcript of Joyce's

1 Incidentally it should be noted that Stuart's major publisher, before and after the war, was Victor Gollancz, who was both Jewish and left-wing. It is sufficient comment, perhaps, to record that Gollancz published four of the twelve pre-war novels and all of the post-war novels up to but excluding Black List, Section H.

2 E. H. Cookridge, Secrets of the British Secret Service (London, 1947), p. 75. The quotation is cited by H. J. O'Brien, The Representation of Religion in the Fiction of Liam O'Flaherty and Francis Stuart (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Trinity College, Dublin, 1965-6), p. 23.

3 Francis Stuart p. 59.

trial[1] and the work of serious propaganda historians[2] who treat Joyce's activities do not mention Stuart at all. The historical value of Cookridge's comments, therefore, can be discredited although they still provide an indication of how the ordinary 'man in the street' Cookridge's readership, might be expected to respond to Stuart's actions.

Although Carolle J. Carter attempts to deal with some of the issues surrounding Stuart's presence in Germany, in The Shamrock and the Swastika,[3] this account is insufficient in several ways. Carter's description of Stuart as 'a product of the English public schools'[4] is at variance with Natterstad's description of Stuart's school-life as 'emotionally disturbing'.[5] She says, too, that 'after the civil war, Francis did remain in the IRA'[6] whereas Natterstad states 'he never became an official member of the Irish Republican Army';[7] although Natterstad gives no source for his statement, Carter's reference is to a 'confidential government source', which is scarcely more helpful. Elsewhere, footnoting is carried out in such a fashion that it is difficult to determine what source is being used to verify what information. For example, Carter says:

> On February 4 [1940] Stuart delivered the IRA's message to the Abwehr. Those who greeted him seemed suspicious, possibly because he was an English-speaking foreigner claiming to have a message from the IRA chief. They rang up Fromme, who knew MacBride and other members of Stuart's family well. Fromme went to Stuart's flat to talk to him and

1 The Trial of William Joyce, edited by J. W. Hall (London, 1946).
2 For example, C. Cruikshank, The Fourth Arm: Psychological Warfare 1938-45 (London, 1977); Michael Balfour, Propaganda in War 1939-45: Organisation, Policies and Publics in Britain and Germany (London, 1979).
3 Carolle J. Carter, The Shamrock and the Swastika (Palo Alto, California, 1977).
4 Carter, p. 105.
5 Francis Stuart, p. 15.
6 Carter, p. 253.
7 Francis Stuart, p. 28.

then cleared up the matter.[1]

The statement is intriguing. Why might the Abwehr not have been suspicious? Why should they be surprised that a putative IRA member should be 'an English-speaking foreigner'? To what does the phrase 'the matter' refer - Stuart's identity, the IRA message, or, perhaps, IRA-Abwehr liason? Carter's footnote simply recites three different sources without giving any indication of the information to which each part might refer. Although Carter may well be in possession of much accurate information, regrettably she does not make it available, in any real sense, and her account obscures rather than illuminates Stuart's period in Germany, therefore.

A similar obscurity still gathers around Stuart's broadcasts. Natterstad asserts that Stuart did 'write and deliver his own talks to Ireland . . . once a week for well over a year'[2] and entries from a wartime diary of Stuart, published in Journal of Irish Literature, show that the date of his first talk was 5 August 1942 and that three subsequent talks were given at weekly intervals.[3] However, Robert Fisk's sober and well-informed discussion of Stuart's talks, in In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality, 1939-45, shows that the first broadcast made under the name of Francis Stuart took place on 17 March 1942:

> he prepared his first script early in 1942 and on March 17 - Saint Patrick's Day - the monitors at the BBC's receiving station at Caversham in England, who listened to all Axis transmissions from the Continent, heard a German voice announce that 'the well-known Irish writer Francis Stuart' would broadcast that night to Ireland. The British monitors duly tuned in to the Zeesen and Oslo transmitters of German radio on long and short waves at 9.45 pm to listen to Stuart, confident but

1 Carter, p. 108.
2 Francis Stuart, p. 64.
3 'Selections from a Berlin Diary', p. 87-93.

cautious, expounding on 'Ireland's place in the new Europe'.[1]

In this first talk, Stuart's references to ideas such as 'nations will have to live as members of a group or family'[2] and 'Ireland belongs to Europe and England does not belong to it'[3] are interpreted by Fisk as an exposition of the principles of National Socialism. Taken in isolation, this would be an obvious interpretation; in the context of Stuart's writing, however, it is interesting to note the recurrence of certain ideas. The notion of communality, of forming a community, is present here; more importantly, the idea that Ireland should free herself of her British inheritance and turn to a specifically European one is the central theme of Nationality and Culture, written in 1924.[4] In other talks, Stuart refers to the possibility of 'a great race meeting to celebrate peace'[5] an idea which seems simply ludicrous until considered in the context of the spiritual significance which horse-racing has in Stuart's writing. Fisk clearly has some difficulties in understanding some of Stuart's attitudes, calling him 'a political innocent'.[6] His summary of the military significance of Stuart's talks is interesting, however:

1 Fisk, p. 330. The source of Fisk's information is the Public Record Office, Northern Ireland. Records of broadcasts made by Stuart on 17 March, 19 March and 5 April 1942, all dates given by Fisk, appear in the British Broadcasting Monitoring Service: Digest of Foreign Bulletins deposited at the British Library. In those of 19 March and 5 April, the name is spelt 'Stewart'. However, no records appear of the broadcasts made, according to the Berlin Diary, on 5, 12, 19 and 26 August 1942; nor is there a record of the broadcast made on 14 October 1942, a date given by Fisk and implied by Berlin Diary.

2 Fisk, p. 330.

3 Fisk, p. 331.

4 See also Fisk, p. 350, for a talk given by Stuart on 8 January 1944: 'Until Dublin becomes a much better place for the average working family to live in than Belfast we lose more than half the force of our claim to Belfast'. Compare this with Nationality and Culture, p. 14-15: 'the urgency of a true economically sound Republic is impressed upon us . . . Either we must be self-supporting economically and intellectually or we must remain in the state of a mere colony'.

5 Fisk, p. 349; talk given on 16 March 1943.

6 Fisk, p. 329.

Since Germany had not been at war with Eire, there was in one sense no more reason to call Stuart a collaborator than there was to make the same imputation against the Irishmen who worked and fought for the British. The stigma stayed with him, however, as he knew it would; even thirty-three years after the war, he could still be publicly reviled in Dubliin as 'that dreadful political reprobate'. Whether his wartime influence on the Irish was as dramatic as the alienation which he deliberately brought upon himself is open to queston. Even at the height of the war, there were fewer than 200,000 wireless sets in Eire, and those Irish listeners who tuned in to Germany generally recall only Joyce's 'thin and drawling' voice on the English service. Off the west coast of Ireland, the Aran islanders remembered that a German broadcaster - presumably Hartmann - 'spoke to us in Irish every week'. But when Stuart eventually returned to Dublin, he discovered that the details of his Berlin broadcasts were not only forgotten but almost unknown. 'I hardly ever met anyone who heard me,' he said later. 'I don't think anyone really listened'. 1

In fact, little serious attention seems to have been paid to the broadcasts; propaganda historians and others with an interest in the field replied to private enquiries that they had no knowledge of them.[2] Although in an article in Scrutiny in 1943 D. J. Enright gives the footnote 'Francis Stuart has now joined up with Pound and Woodhouse and is broadcasting Pan-Celticism under the auspices of the Nazi Party',[3]

1 Fisk, p. 350-51.

2 In private written communications, Michael Balfour commented that he did not remember having come across the name of Francis Stuart and on the question of the association between Stuart and Joyce, Cecil de Sausmarez, formerly a member of the Political Warfare Executive said that he could find no record of a connection between the two individuals. Charles Cruikshank, Elizabeth Barker of London University, and Nicholas Pronay of Leeds University had no knowledge of Stuart as a propagandist.

3 D. J. Enright, 'Cormac's Ruined House: A Survey of the Modern Irish Novel', Scrutiny, 11, no. 3 (Spring 1943) 180-88, p. 184. Interestingly, although H is shown 'a report from Dublin in an English magazine, Picture Post, saying that the Irish weren't impressed by the promises H was broadcasting from Germany' (Black List, Section H, p. 371) and Simeon Grimes is told of 'reports of your collaboration with the Nazi authorities that have appeared in some of our more sensational papers, including the illustrated periodical Picture Post' (The High Consistory, p. 208) Stuart is not indexed in that periodical during the war years. Both Pound and Woodhouse are, however: Pound's picture with the captions 'AMERICA'S HAW-HAW' and WANTED: EZRA POUND' appeared on 11 April, 1942 p. 25; Woodhouse's appeared opposite one of Thomas Mann under the headline 'A GERMAN broadcasts TO GERMANY - AN ENGLISH-MAN broadcasts TO AMERICA' on 19 July, 1941, p. 14-15. As a national of a neutral country Stuart's case was, of course, legally quite different from that of Pound, Woodhouse, and Mann.

when asked privately in 1982 about his knowledge of Stuart's broadcasting, D. J. Enright said in a written communication that he had no recollection of what lay behind his remark about Francis Stuart. Clearly, Stuart's experience of Germany was extremely private, with a significance which was ultimately personal. This privacy is intensified by the difficulties of reconciling conflicting accounts with insufficient evidence. Some explanation may be found to reconcile the diary-date of 5 August for the first talk with Fisk's date of 17 March: perhaps, for example, the first talks were 'ghosted' under Stuart's name and only subsequently did he write and talk himself. Similarly, by re-examining some of Carter's sources it might be possible to ascertain what information is admissable and what is not. However, while it is difficult to prove precisely what was taking place in Germany it must be still more difficult to comment fruitfully on it.[1] Articles such as Natterstad's which seeks to apologise for Stuart's involvement in Germany by saying 'his pro-German sentiment derived largely from his intense dissatisfaction with the grey middle-class life he found entrenched in Ireland and the West generally'[2] and 'Stuart's natural inclination to identify with a minority, particularily a vilified minority, led him to misjudge the character and motives of the emerging Nazi regime'[3] are redundant, perhaps even presumptuous, therefore, since they are based on the incorrect assumption that there is an absolute, verifiable body of information which shows unequivocally Stuart's attitude to Germany.

1 Stuart's presence in Germany has been dealt with imaginatively by Rolf Lass in On A Sour Apple-Tree: A Historical Play for Radio in Five Scenes which was runner-up in Duais An Phiarsaigh Competition, Telefeis Eirrean, 1979. This work is a salutary reminder of the excitement that must have existed in Berlin at that time. It also indicates that the importance of Stuart's actions should be looked for in their imaginative potential rather than in their historical significance.

2 'Francis Stuart: From Laragh to Berlin', p. 18.

3 'Francis Stuart: From Laragh to Berlin', p. 22.

The biographical task is complicated further by incidental problems such as a mistaken reference to Stuart which has been perpetuated. In a review of volume two of W. B. Yeat's Uncollected Prose Stuart writes:

> I am introduced, by the editors, relying on an earlier reference by Professor Norman Jeffares, as having succeeded where Yeats had failed by marrying Iseult . . . 'the "girl who knew all Dante once and lived to bear children to a dunce".' This is one of those comic little reverberations that Yeats was constantly and often indirectly causing around him; in this case the professor's disapproval of my attitude during the last war was, I believe, the reason for his insistence on the correctness of his interpretation, even impressing it on his students who repeated it in their own Yeatsian theses. [1]

From an objective point of view Jeffares's identification seems idiosyncratic since the extracts from Yeats's letters describing Stuart, which Jeffares also cites, include the comments 'If luck comes to his aid he will be our great writer' and 'He himself is typical of the new Ireland'.[2] Yeats also wrote the editorial to To-morrow which was signed by Stuart and Cecil Salkeld, and contributed 'Leda and the Swan' to the magazine, suggesting that if Jeffares's identification is correct some fuller explanation for Yeats's inconsistency is required than the one he gives, that 'Yeats's views on him changed from time to time'.[3] An enquiry placed in Notes and Queries[4] asking for a more appropriate identification for the girl produced no replies and it is possible that some works on Yeats may continue to repeat Jeffares's idiosyncratic annotation.

Perhaps the only source which should be relied on for an explanation of Stuart's actions and attitudes is Stuart himself, especially since he has shown himself willing to answer questions about

1 Francis Stuart, 'The Public Man', Hibernia, 31 October 1975, p. 14.
2 A. Norman Jeffares, A Commentary on the Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats (London, 1968), p. 388.
3 Jeffares, p. 388.
4 Notes and Queries, edited by E. G. Stanley, J. D. Fleeman and D. Jewitt, 27, no. 6 (December 1980), p. 537-8.

the matter in interviews and has occasionally referred to the period when reviewing novels. In an interiew with J. H. Natterstad in 1975, he responded to the question 'How did you see Hitler in 1939?' by saying:

> I don't want to say how I now see Hitler. How I saw him then is, even if I do my best to be honest and factual, not easy to explain . . . I think I saw him as a kind of blind Samson who was pulling down the pillars of Western society as we knew it, which I still believed had to come about before any new world could arise. It was like my early belief in the Russian Revolution and later in the Irish Civil War. 1

He acknowledges that his view of Hitler changed later:

> Even in the early days of the war I would not have had the common view of him, say, that of the Allied people, as a sadistic monster and so on, though that I realized was in him. What disappointed me in Hitler was that I saw him as a little bourgeois man who had, partly through other things, come to a position of power which he was completely incapable of filling . . . when I came to this realization, I then had the idea of leaving Germany and going on to Russia. 2

What is important here is the change in view and understanding, from his initial idea of Hitler to his disappointment in him; as this indicates, his response to Hitler was not a simple polar one. Hitler was neither absolute hero nor absolute villain, but a force to be understood and evaluated, to be used to further his own vision if possible. Significantly, the disillusionment is a personal one, a realisation that

1 'An Interview', p. 25. That views change as historical perspectives alter is clear from essays on international figures to which Stuart contributed, published in 1935. In a popular work called Great Contemporaries: Essays by Various Hands (London, 1935) Stuart's essay entitled 'President De Valera' describes him as having 'attempted to live for his people as a father and a shepherd, taking his inspiration from saints rather than statesmen' (54-66, p. 55). In the same work, an essay by G. Ward-Price entitled 'Adolf Hitler; Dictator of Germany' describes Hitler as 'a sentimentalist, a philosopher, and a fatalist. By instinct - not foresight or to serve a political ambition - his attitude of mind was exactly attuned to that renewal of national confidence that developed in Germany' (178-200, p. 179).

2 'An Interview', p. 25.

the experience he looked for was not going to occur, which produced the intention of seeking it elsewhere. In another interview three years later, in 1979, with Anthony Cronin, he made the same comparisons with Russia and the Civil War:

> I thought this revolution was going to make a world fit for poets, I saw myself in those days as a poet. Then the Civil War was the same illusion. I was no sooner in the war than I thought to myself, my goodness, it's another misunderstanding, you know.
>
> Yes. You felt about the Nazi thing in the same way.
>
> Quite true. But by then I had become a bit embittered really, or disillusioned. I understood by then, you see, that there could be no revolution without first the destruction of the whole. 1

Later, he said:

> for a certain kind of writer anything attracts him that cuts absolutely across all this, what would you call it, rationalism. It's rationalism, he feels at times, that is his enemy, and the people who can justify their position because of this, that and the other . . . We have no power except the power of our imagination. 2

Here, again, the response is an intensely personal one, viewing war and revolution as the agency through which the psychic orientation of the world could be changed, from rationalism to 'a world fit for poets'. The Second World War, then, differed from the internal unrest of Russia and Ireland only in scale, as far as Stuart was concerned at the time it happened, and in the possibility of a 'destruction of the whole' which seemed the only way of producing any change since by then the expected Russian and Irish new worlds had failed to materialise. 'The whole',

1 'Coming Up For the Fifteenth: p. 10. See also 'Political Metaphors', p. 145: 'I thought we were fighting for some sort of free society, in which the poet . . . would have a greater freedom and a greater audience'.
2 'Coming Up For the Fifteenth', p. 10.

though, is an attitude, a philosophy - rationalism - which informs the country and its government rather than itself, its ministers and politicians. Although they are inseparable it is not a question of siding with one political faction or another but insisting on the 'power of our imagination' against rationalism and cold-blooded justifications. This is expanded in his autobiographical reminiscences on Alternative Government:

> had we been, as we are now, full of . . . guerilla groups here and other groups there and fighting in the African forests and Idi Amin and Arafat and Gadafi, well I would have gone and joined one of them gladly. But we hadn't any such opportunities, there was nobody to join, well I don't think I joined anybody but I went to Hitler's Germany because I saw them as a disruptive influence . . . naive as it may seem now I saw him as a sort of Samson, who was, you know, blind, furious, going to pull down everything. What came after I didn't care. Of course I was completely mistaken, Hitler was not a Samson, he was quite a mediocre little man . . . there's no question of defending myself; I've nothing in one way to defend. I have been blacklisted, calumniated - not calumniated, perhaps justly criticised for going to Germany and staying in Germany through the war - Justly? I don't know whether justly or unjustly and I don't really care. All this business of siding with Hitler or siding with somebody else, to me it has become largely irrelevant. 1

Again the political identity of the agent for change is not seen as relevant, and the idea of joining a consensus is dismissed. For Stuart, as in his novels, war is a source of change and upheaval through which new insights may come. The question of guilt or innocence in conventional social or political terms is not applicable therefore: whether the criticism levelled at Stuart was just or unjust must be irrelevant to him since it is the judgement of the consensus whose destruction he hoped for.

1 Alternative Government, 'Autobiography'.
2 See also Stuart's review of Stephen Spender's The Thirties and After: 'Leslie Fiedler pointed out in a famous essay that when a writer starts taking specific 'anti' attitudes, no matter how morally justified, he compromises the interior vision in which his "alternative worlds" are formulated. Nothing less than a total "No" is what he is impelled to give in rejection of all ideologies, institutions, consensuses, hallowed customs, general assumptions'. Francis Stuart, 'A New Horizon', Hibernia 19, October 1978, p. 13.

Even such clear statements as these are limited in their usefulness, however, since they raise questions to which no solutions are provided. For the notion of the alienated criminal or the outsider, to work, there has to be an alienating consensus. Had the Second World War succeeded in destroying and changing everything, how could that alienation have existed? In historical terms it might be argued that since Stuart felt Hitler to be ' a mediocre little man', German victory would have produced a society from which he would have been equally estranged but if that line of reasoning were valid it would not explain his intention of going to Russia when he became disillusioned with Hitler and Germany: in fact, it seems as if Stuart's actions are not explicable in historical terms. Then, too, these statements are subject to constraints which affect all autobiography, such as the difficulty in recalling and expressing past attitudes and experiences against the background of present ones; the possibility that, as Michael Sprinker puts it, 'It could be useful and important for one's activity to interpret oneself falsely'. There is, too, the question of how far artist and man can be separated, to what degree an author's life is permeated with his art, and what part of his recollections, therefore, are purely personal and factual and what part of them are an expression of a universal experience into which he merges. It is these sorts of considerations which reduce the potential usefulness of comments made by Stuart in reviews as well as in interviews. For example, his recollections of Libertas Schultze-Boysen, a member of a pro-Communist group in Berlin, given in his review of James P. O'Donnell's The Berlin Bunker are conditioned for the reader by the context in which they appear; for the reader they cannot stand alone but are part of a critical construct with functions such as pointing up what has been said elsewhere, emphasising the reviewer's authority, and giving depth to the

review.[1] Similarly, there are difficulties with the material published as 'Selections From A Berlin Diary, 1942'. Leaving aside the title reminiscent of Isherwood's first and last chapter headings in Goodbye To Berlin - 'A Berlin Diary (Autumn 1930)' and 'A Berlin Diary (Winter 1932-3)' - the material is selected and thus has had authorial, or perhaps editorial, control exerted on it; it is out of context, that is, it lacks not only that which should come before or after it but also correspondence, documents, other associated material which from a biographer's point of view would be desirable to establish authenticity;[2] and since it is the work of a writer, who has used a diary-style in several novels[3] it is possible, perhaps likely, that its entries could be subject to some experimentation with the division

1 Francis Stuart, 'The Fallen Lucifer', Hibernia 14 June, 1979, p. 16. There is a factual inconsistency. In the recollection, Stuart says 'when I gave them my telephone number, Libertas surprised me by saying she could memorise it and there was no need to enter it in her notebook, a friendly precaution, as I realised later, against my involvement should they be arrested'. However, Fisk, p. 16 says of Stuart 'The Gestapo found his own home telephone number in one of Schulze-Boysen's notebooks and turned up at his flat one morning to question him about the couple'.

2 An entry for August 9 in the Diary (p.88) begins 'A letter from Sam Beckett in Paris, which I was glad to get.' According to Deirdre Bair, Samuel Beckett (London, 1978) p. 269-70 Samuel Beckett was part of the Gloria resistance group in Paris at that time and a letter from him to Stuart might seem improbable for the practical reasons of a disrupted postal service as much as because of their different milieux.; Verification was sought, therefore, to validate the diary as a whole as well as to verify the one entry. In a written communication Mr Beckett said that he did not remember the letter in question, that he did not see how he could have written from Paris to an address in Germany at that time, but that if Francis Stuart said he did he would not declare that he did not. He added that they had met in Dublin from time to time before the war but that they had not met since, to his regret since he had liked Mr Stuart and had been interested in his work.

3 Victors and Vanquished, p. 270-9, 285-7; Black List, Section H, p. 369-70; The High Consistory uses a diary-style dated heading for most of its sections. Also, the second part of Stuart's account of Frank Ryan in Germany ends with a diary entry which emphasises this intertwining of factual and impressionistic narration, the one adding weight to the other. So, the factual account ends 'The next day I had a phone call from her from Dresden that he was dying and before I could get the permit to travel another phone call came to say he was dead'; the diary entry which follows ends 'Coming back in the train, the sun setting under very black clouds over the flat Saxon plain.' 'Frank Ryan in Germany: part II', p. 40.

between fact and art. Again, this is not to question Stuart's honesty or the good faith with which that material is presented. Rather, it is to suggest, as Hugh Maxton does, that 'nothing can be assumed'[1] about Stuart's life and work, that the relationship between them must continue to be problematical and statements about his life treated with circumspection. What is required is a biography as well-researched, informed and authoritative as that by Ellmann on Joyce, which engages not only with the details of his life but also with the social, literary and historical contexts of his actions, for until the arrival of such a work those difficulties cannot be fully examined, still less solved.

An investigation of Stuart's work exclusively through his biography is of limited use, therefore. The reverse is not entirely true, however; while it is not possible to read the novels as a kind of biographical palimpsest it is possible to agree with H's comment that 'perhaps the quality of his work was the only real test of the state of a writer's psyche'. The consistency of Stuart's aesthetic, the integrity of the response of his heroes to their exposure to war, and the hidden stream of spiritual creativity they find in it, are perhaps the only standards by which Stuart's period in Germany should be judged. It might be argued that these insights have little to offer anyone outside the sort of criminal, alienated artist that the narrator of Things To Live For, H, Sugrue and Grimes wish to become, that Stuart's vision is so esoteric that he offers only limited insights not universally applicable, and that the value of his experiences is thereby diminished. However, this is a view which is not supported by Stuart's notion of the interdependence of the simple and commonplace with the cosmic and spiritual, and which Stuart himself is at pains to correct. Speaking on Alternative Government he says:

1 Hugh Maxton, 'Francis Stuart: The Long-Distance Winner', Hibernia, 28 August 1970, p. 20.

> I know Solzhenitsyn, in one of his more remarkable statements . . . said 'A great writer in a community is like an alternative government'. Well if that is so, and it is so, therefore a group of good writers in a community is an alternative government. They haven't the power, naturally, they haven't the police force, they haven't the military, they don't make the laws, but they are an alternative government in the sense that they keep open certain alternatives and that is kept open in the minds of many people who would give in to despair had they no alternative offered to them. 1

Stuart's aesthetic is concerned with recognizing and exploring imaginatively these alternatives, a process in which life and art are inseparable. He has made this explicit in his statement that:

> it would be generally agreed that before a book can be called 'outstanding' or 'important' . . . it should show a deep involvement in the theme by the writer.
> In this sense all good novels have an autobiographical element, though not necessarily in the outward scenario or events. But the responses of the central person or persons - in order to carry conviction and set a reader's hidden nerve tingling with surprise at something he did not know before - must have been experienced by the novelist. 2

The time spent in Germany, therefore, cannot be examined by trying to find in the novels verification of the facts of Stuart's own life, his own 'outward scenario'. Rather, it must be evaluated by the quality of redemptive vision his heroes find there and communicate to the reader. This is both compassionate and accessible; and the final judgement on the relationship between life and work and the German experience must be that of Roger Garfitt who has said:

> There are still critics who feel that Stuart's move to Berlin in 1940 prejudices everything he has since written. I would argue precisely the opposite: that to the questions raised by that decision, to the questions Stuart himself raises when discussing it, the character and quality of his work since then provides the only sufficient answer. 3

1 Alternative Government, Autobiography
2 Francis Stuart, 'A Season in Hell', Sunday Tribune, 7 February 1982, p. 18.
3 'Outside the Moral Pale: The novels of Francis Stuart', p. 70.

CHAPTER 6: STYLE

The consistency of the ideas and beliefs which structure Stuart's writing, it has been suggested, is apparent in his harmonising of theme, motif and setting, and in the focus on the notion of redemption, which is central to his work. To summarise the argument: redemption is an experience of the indivisibility of man from a dynamic universe or godhead, and this experience is a mystical, intuitive understanding rather than a logical, intellectual one. It is found by taking risks, embracing the isolation from the everyday world which defeat brings, passing through a period of suffering in which physical privation is only an expression of a more important spiritual agony, and finally, resolving that suffering into a profound insight through contact with the compassionate, healing power of woman. Vital to an understanding of this process is an appreciation of the paradoxes on which it is founded. Firstly, material loss produced by taking risks, in the form of gambling, for instance, becomes spiritual gain if that sense of defeat is experienced completely. Secondly, because the criminal is rejected by society, his experiences are potentially closer to those of the mystic, who isolates himself from society, than are those of the socially respectable, conventionally religious man. Thirdly, isolation from society leads eventually to a reintegration with it and a revaluing of it in which small, homely things and actions are seen to contain a great spiritual force. Fourthly, the subject of the experience may begin as an ordinary man but will end as an artist in the sense that he will have begun to understand the different perceptions, the alternative realities, which are the subject of art and which the artist explores, tries to contact and makes explicable in his art. Fifthly, the contact with woman is a uniting of sacred and profane love, in which sexuality transcends the merely physical and becomes an expression of spirituality

which cleanses, heals, and reveals: and through this, woman is connected with all physical agencies which express spiritual potential as well as with spirituality itself. Finally, the nature of the redeemed state itself is paradoxical, for it is not a final, achieved state but a dynamic one, a starting point for further insight and experience, not a point of final arrival. These are the concerns which are expressed through the interrelated themes of gambler, artist and ordinary man; mystic and criminal; and sacred and profane love. In their turn, they are extended and made dynamic by their interrelationship with motif. Risk-taking, delinquency and madness, the ark motif which suggests communal living and reintegration, are all integrated by the hare motif, which is also used as an expression of the spiritual power of woman, and the life-potential of female sexuality. That this is coherent with Stuart's aesthetics is discernible in his earliest allusion to the nature of artistic insight, the letter to the Times Literary Supplement about the printing error in Keat's poetry, which pointed to his interest in alternative, more penetrating insights into the world. It is shown, too, in the subjects of early poems such as 'Criminals' and 'Introduction to a Spiritual Poem', in short works such as Mystics and Mysticism, and Racing for Profit and Pleasure and the extracts from his unpublished play Who Fears to Speak, as well as in the mainstream of his writing. Finally, his use of biographical structures and personae make the process of redemption concrete by presenting it in naturalistic settings and in the form of realistic experiences.

It follows, therefore, that the idea of redemption will exist in the language structures of his novels, and that this is potentailly discernible by internal analysis and comparison. The examination of a passage from Stuart's recent work should allow the nature of his most developed style to be determined; by looking at the corpus as a whole other factors which contribute to its sense of cohesion could be

identified; and by examining the changes made in the form of his work - from his early poetry to the shuffled report of The High Consistory - the effect of form on tone and style might be recognised. The alternative method of examining Stuart's style would be by comparing his work with that of other authors, examining their literary, social, political and spiritual contexts, and arriving at a definition of its stylistic character and a judgement of their relative merits in that way. This alternative method is difficult, but tempting because of the allusions to other writers Stuart makes in his work; because the settings of his novels include Ireland and Europe; and because of the statements critics make about his work and that he makes about the work of other authors. Such an examination would ask in what way Stuart's work belonged to an Anglo-Irish or an Irish tradition and in doing so, ask questions about the meaning of those terms: are they interchangeable or does the one refer to work in the English language and the other to work in the Irish language - 'Ireland' and 'Irish Ireland', as Douglas Hyde put it;[1] does Stuart belong to the tradition begun by 'the first Irish novel, Maria Edgeworth's Castle Rackrent'[2] through the settings of novels such as The White Hare and The Great Squire, or to that of 'modern Irish prose fiction' which 'may be said to have begun with George Moore and James Joyce'[3] because of his contemporaneity and the experimentation with form of The High Consistory and Black List, Section H; or is the matter rather as Anthony Cronin suggests in his most recent discussion of the meaning of 'Anglo-Irish', that:

1 Douglas Hyde, A Literary History of Ireland (London, 1899), p.xxxiii.
2 Patrick Rafroidi, 'A Question of Inheritance; The Anglo-Irish Tradition', in The Irish Novel in Our Time, edited by P. Rafroidi and M. Harmon (University of Lille, 1975-76), pp. 1-29 (p. 1).
3 Maurice Harmon, 'Generations Apart: 1925-1975', in The Irish Novel in Our Time, edited by P. Rafroidi and M. Harmon (University of Lille, 1975-6), pp. 49-65, p. 49.

To put it briefly, confronted with the phenomenon of Ulysses, with the poems of Yeats's full maturity, with Kavanagh's poems or Finnegans Wake or At Swim Two Birds or Black List, Section H or the Beckett trilogy, there is not much point in talking about Anglo-Irish literature. Whatever else these works are, they are not Anglo-anything, unless, that is, the work of Whitman or Hart or Crane or Melville or Dos Passos or Scott Fitzgerald is Anglo-something. [1]

Then, too, it would be necessary to examine the parallels drawn by commentators between Stuart's work and that of other writers. This examination would establish exactly what similarities existed between Hemingway's style and that of Women and God[2] and Pigeon Irish[3]; between Dostoyevsky's work and The Pillar of Cloud and Redemption[4]; and between Stuart's later novels and those of D.H. Lawrence[5]; and it would discuss how such comparisons can be helpful to an understanding of Stuart's style. As well as this, the influence of other authors alluded to in Stuart's novels - Tolstoy, Kafka, Mann, Joyce, Rozanov, John Lodwick,

1 Heritage Now, p. 11.
2 Francis Stuart, p. 39.
3 David H. Greene, 'The Return of Francis Stuart', Envoy, 5, no. 20 (April-June 1951), 10-21 (p. 11).
4 Francis Stuart, p. 69, 73.
5 David H. Greene, p. 18-20; 'Constants in Contemporary Irish Fiction', p. 213, 218-20. According to H. J. O'Brien, pp. 16-17, the relationship between the work of Lawrence and Stuart's earlier novels is discussed in some detail by Helen Isaacson, Woman and God: A Study of Francis Stuart (unpublished M.A. dissertation, New York University, 1956). The author of the thesis is given as Helen Goldberg in Francis Stuart, p. 88. After difficulty was experienced by the present writer in gaining a copy of the thesis from New York University, in reply to a private communication J. H. Natterstad suggested that it had been submitted under the name Isaacson rather than Goldberg. He also said that he agreed with an opinion of the thesis expressed to him privately by David H. Greene, that it was a modest affair and not one that contained any startling revelations. In private telecommunications the Library and the English Department at New York University said that they had destroyed all the M. A. dissertations which they held. They were unable either to supply a copy of the dissertation, or to confirm that it was written under the name of Isaacson. The English Department said that they had no records which might show whether they had had a student named Helen Isaacson.

Emily Brontë, Celine, Keats, Blake, and Burns,[1] for example - would have to be assessed and the function of their inclusion discussed. The relationship between Stuart's work and that of contemporary Irish writers, especially the ones he discusses in The Soft Centre of Irish Writing, as well as his admiration for much of Samuel Beckett's work, would have to be investigated. Finally, more peripheral but not less important questions such as whether Stuart can be considered to be a Catholic novelist, how exactly that term should be construed, and what it means in terms of style, would require an answer.[2] However, a comparison of that sort can only be undertaken when an enquiry of the former kind, an internal analysis of Stuart's work, has provided it with a base on which it can be built. Without that, the terms of reference from which comparison can be made are restricted; and in any case, the present state of scholarship provides only a very limited description of his work. Although it is to be hoped that this situation will be amended in the future, it sets certain limits on the methods of inquiry presently available. This is not to suggest that later enquiries are at the mercy of some previous poor scholarship[3] but that for the present a

1 Examples of references to these authors can be found as follows:
Tolstoy: Try the Sky, p. 25, 29, 181; The High Consistory, p. 59.
Kafka: Black List, Section H, p. 60, 274, 310; Memorial, p. 159, 200.
Dostoyevsky:- Women and God, p. 30; A Hole in the Head, p. 24, 100, 214.
Mann: Black List, Section H, p. 274, 360, 363.
Joyce: Redemption, p. 71; Victors and Vanquished, p. 175, 262.
Rozanov: Black List, Section H, p. 250-2, 282.
John Lodwick: Memorial, p. 31, 61, 204.
Emily Brontë: Black List, Section H, p. 162; A Hole in the Head (as a character).
Celine: Black List, Section H, p. 196.
Keats: Try the Sky, p. 177; A Hole in the Head, p. 43, 46, 163.
Blake: Try the Sky, p. 262-3; Memorial, p. 204.
Burns: The Flowering Cross, p. 26, 36; Good Friday's Daughter, p. 45, 87.

2 See Francis Stuart, p. 34-5.

3 An example of such critical work is provided by the preface to the American edition of Black List, Section H, the limitations of which have been pointed out by Frank Kermode, 'Estrangement', Listener, 23 March 1982, p. 382-3 and Anthony Cronin, Heritage Now, p. 161.

different approach may be more useful in validating the claim that Stuart's writing merits re-assessment. Nor does it mean that no reference can be made to other authors or contexts outlined, but rather that such reference can only seek to illustrate a point which has been yielded by the text itself, or which is self-evident in a general way or to indicate areas which might provide fruitful future investigation. Specific enquiry, however, must concentrate on the text of Stuart's work and investigate his style primarily by an internal comparison and examination, of use of language, form, and the interrelationship between them in his corpus.

Some investigations have been carried out in this area by H.J. O'Brien, in his inquiry into The Representation of Religion in the Fiction of Liam O'Flaherty and Francis Stuart (1965-6). Primarily, O'Brien is concerned to show that the imaginative responses to religion of the two authors is different, that Stuart rejects the Church as an institution but accepts Christian teaching as an analogue or model for man's spiritual experience, while O'Flaherty regards man's rationality as being on a par with the juridical Church and rejects both in favour of natural man and the power of nature. He does this through a close analysis of certain sections of the fiction of O'Flaherty and Stuart; in the case of Francis Stuart, extracts from these analyses have been published in a modified form in two articles, 'Francis Stuart's Cathleen Ni Houlahan' and 'St Catherine of Siena in Ireland'.[1] The limitation of the work is that it insists on the novels as figura derived from the Bible, and its analysis of language confines itself largely to an interpretation of metaphor to show how those figura are developed. Necessarily, this limits the nature of spiritual insight offered to an

1 H. J. O'Brien, 'Francis Stuart's Cathleen Ni Houlahan', Dublin Magazine, 8, no. 8 (Summer 1971), 48-54; H.J. O'Brien, 'St Catherine of Siena in Ireland', Eire-Ireland, 6, no. 2 (Summer 1971), 98-110.

orthodox Christian one, if expressed unorthodoxly, and restricts the examination of how imagery functions in the novel to an identification of variants on Christian iconism. Nevertheless, the work is useful since it validates a method of approach and provides a basis from which a deeper insight into Stuart's spiritual values can be gained.

Such insights are discernible in style as well as in content: the consistency of Stuart's aesthetic means that similar preoccupations recur in a more refined form throughout his work and that his development of style can be approached through an examination of these preoccupations, since their greater complexity requires a more refined style to express them. Close analysis of the passage which concludes the main narrative of The High Consistory provides an example of this:

EPILOGUE (Concluded)

14B, Rue de l'Alma, Roubaix, 1974

I have still the small attic room that reminds me more and more of Van Gogh's tiny final studio at Auvers with its only light coming from a skylight.

After the lapse of three years I can briefly recount what happened after declining to be taken by ambulance to hospital, the journey back with a broken leg to the island, the subsequent parting from Claire and my coming here, which I would have been incapable of recording accurately until quite lately.

For a long time I still saw my painful hobbling back to the cottage, absurd as it may sound, as in some way making up for the non-return of the ocelot. And it is only lately that I see everything now from Claire's, or, as I believe, the true and unbiased angle. And it took me all this time to accept her decision as the right and only one.

After some time of working at home, I am going again almost every day in all but the very worst storms, which are fairly frequent here, to the old Flanders battlefields.

Is there not a monotony in that, and does it not show in this last phase of mine? Possibly, but I can't be sure, nor have I had any expert critical assessment of what I am doing. If so, it does not greatly matter as long as there is also the other quality that I hope, and at times have enough faith to believe, has crept in, as by chance, to the canvasses. I don't dare to define it, but it helps me understand what Van Gogh had in his tormented head when he wrote of his pictures to his brother from St Rémy: 'Some of them may retain their calm come the Deluge.'
April 30, 1979 1

1 The High Consistory, p. 317.

The idea of redemption is expressed fully here. Instead of following conventional behaviour and being taken to hospital, Grimes endured the pain of 'hobbling back' to the cottage, risking all on the chance that his doing so would make up for the death of the ocelot. His gamble lost, he was forced into the isolation which defeat produces, until, after three years of this suffering, he can 'see everything now from Claire's or, as I believe, the true and unbiased angle'. In her absence the healing power of Claire is still present: she represents the truth Grimes has to find and is also the agency through which that truth is found. His redemptive insight is described as 'the other quality', something which 'I don't dare define' but which manifests itself in his canvasses and in the universal compassion he feels for the defeated and isolated, expressed in his visits to the Flanders battlefields. Characteristically, this process includes qualities typical of mysticism such as the sense of a mystery revealed through the application of insight; a sense of the unreality of time, expressed in the unity felt between Grimes, van Gogh, and the Flanders dead; and through this, too, the sense of the unity of all things is felt, the quality which is expressed first as a 'monotony', a single tone, and then, more creatively, as 'calm'. The theme of isolation and reintegration is clear, of course, while the self-identification of Grimes with the ocelot, a beast hunted and killed by respectable farmers in the novel, indicates the themes of mystic and criminal, and gambler and businessman. Claire's refusal to resume their relationship and the insight this brings raises the theme of sexual and sacred love, reinforced, of course, by the Grimes/ocelot connection. Thematically, too, the fact that it is a 'small attic room' where these profound insights take place - it is the lack of facilities in the room for burning it that prevents Grimes destroying the text, that is, destroying these insights - unites the spiritual and the mundane, the mystical and

the homely.[1] Further, the passage contains expressions of the major motifs in Stuart's work. It begins and ends with an evocation of the ark-motif, the symbol of life preserved after destruction and new life springing from it. The attic room has 'its only light coming from a skylight', like the door or window in Noah's ark, while the quote from Van Gogh about his pictures retaining their calm 'come the Deluge' suggests that they should be identified with the ark, an identification encouraged by the earlier allusion to 'a picture . . . the tiny square or oblong ark sailing to us across dangerous and indifferent centuries'.[2] The hare motif is present as a unifying and dynamic force. It exists as the 'hare-equivalent' of the ocelot, which links Grimes and Claire; and through its attribute of madness, links van Gogh to them because of van Gogh's 'tormented head'. The sense of redemption which Grimes feels is produced through his relationship with the healing power of Claire and expressed in his understanding of van Gogh. The ocelot, therefore, is the unifier of these two, and in a sense can be regarded as the being which has produced the redemptive state. Given its innocence, its death, and images associated with it - it is 'like an ikon'[3] and the nightdress Claire wears when she has intercourse with it

1 The High Consistory, p. 7.

2 The High Consistory, p. 311. Letters of Vincent Van Gogh 1886-1890: A Facsimile Edition, introduced by V. W. van Gogh, 2 vols (London, 1977), II, 625 (2/4) shows that in his letter to his brother Theo van Gogh wrote 'certaines toiles qui même dans le débacle gardent leur calm'. The Complete Letters of Vincent van Gogh, introduced by V. W. van Gogh, 3 vols (London, 1958), III, p. 298 translates this as 'some canvasses, which will retain their clam even in the catastrophe'. However, in the earlier Further Letters of Vincent van Gogh to His Brother, 1880-1889, translated by J. van Gogh-Bonger (London, 1929), p. 488 the phrase is rendered as 'some canvases, which even in the deluge will retain their peace'. Clearly, although the translation of 'débacle' as 'deluge' is not peculiar to Stuart, it is of particular interest to him here because of his use of the ark motif.

3 The High Consistory, p. 122.

is 'her holy shroud',[1] - it might be seen as a Christ-symbol.[2]

On the other hand, the relationship between it and Claire is deliberately associated with paganism and pantheism, with 'the gulf between animals and man that only gods could bridge'.[3] In fact, the ocelot combines the two, both the Christian ethic and the pagan, in a vision which unifies through its ambiguity. As Joey Andrell comments about the painting of Claire and the ocelot by Grimes:

> Ostensible subject: Attic scene: bucolic revelry . . . but having said that, doubt and ambiguity creep in as usual. What revels? The atmosphere is rather that of a Via Doloroso. The pard, to give the beast its classical name, the exhausted, reclining girl, the gilded carriage, that, on second glance, suggests a tumbril, rather than a chariot, seem hardly meant to symbolise a spirit of carefree carousal.[4]

It is this sort of developed style that challenges assertions such as that of H. J. O'Brien that Stuart's work can be regarded as a figura of orthodox Christian teaching. Rather, it is closer aligned to the paradoxes and more eclectic statements of mysticism, an intimate and individual expression of redemption, not identifiable with any religious consensus. This individuality is emphasised, too, by the unusual way in which the motif of forming a community appears in the passage. The community formed on the island by Claire, Grimes, Pacella, Robert Banim

1 The High Consistory, p. 58.
2 Compare this with the use of the tiger as a symbol of spiritual power by, for example, Blake in The Tyger and especially by T.S. Eliot in Gerontion: 'In the juvenescence of the year/ Came Christ the tiger'. See also 'Books and the Night: Francis Stuart in conversation with Jorge Luis Borges', In Dublin, 24 June 1982, 20-24. There, Stuart discusses Borges's use of the tiger as a metaphor for some mystical quality, the object of the poet's search which is never found. In reply to Stuart's question, 'Can it be revealed in the end?' Borges says 'We'll find out sooner or later . . . Or maybe the moment before we die. We'll find out all about the Platonic tiger. That was Blake's tiger.' (p. 23). In The Coloured Dome, p. 37 the opening lines of Blake's 'The Tyger' are quoted and Delea compares a woman - companion with a tiger.
3 The High Consistory, p. 161.
4 The High Consistory. p. 66.

and Julio has been dispersed, as the earlier, more intimate one shared by Claire and the ocelot has been destroyed.

In their place is put a spiritual community, the members of the High Consistory, described elsewhere as 'obscure poets and myth-makers . . . engaged on the composition of what he saw as the revelation of an alternative reality'.[1] The membership of this group is never stated; but it might be assumed safely that van Gogh's madness, and his obscurity in his lifetime, and the startling nature of the relationship between Claire and the ocelot, might qualify them for inclusion, while it is towards understanding and expressing an alternative reality, whether this one or some other, that Grimes is progressing. This in turn is linked to the sense of communality which Grimes feels on a larger scale, not only with van Gogh, Claire, and the ocelot, but also with all those who have died in pain, obscurity, and defeat - the victims of Flanders. Here, as in the novels treating the Civil War period and using a World War II background, war is seen to be an agency through which redemption may be found, important not only because of its historical or political significance but because it is a symbol of a spiritual battle. There is a limit to the validity of this kind of de-historicising process, of course, all the more so since The High Consistory deliberately refers to historical contexts such as the Easter Rising and World Wars I and II. However, an unavoidable consciousness of history means that they are constantly present in the reader's mind in The High Consistory, unlike, for example, The Angel of Pity, which has certain limitations because its battles take place in an unspecified place. Working against this historical identity, though, are Grimes's visits to the battlefields irrespective of the nationality of the troops who fought on them. The troops are important because they were all

1 The High Consistory p. 320.

combatants and insofar as they died, they both lost the physical battle and, presumably, won the spiritual battle by finding peace and eternality in death: so, they were united in a way which belied the importance of which side they were on.[1] This sense of unity, of the unimportance of time as a structuring element in man's experience, is central to the dislocated chronology of the novel, which seeks to organise by an associativeness which provides comment on the incidents it relates by their juxtaposition. This disregard of time can be seen in the form of the passage here. The Epilogue is divided into three parts and is, apparently, concluded here. Leaving aside the tautological humour of providing a conclusion to a conclusion, there is a deliberate attempt to disrupt the notion of what should constitute an epilogue and how it should appear in the novel, a delinquency of form as calculated as including a list of Dramatis Personae but inserting it at the back. Then, too, the passage has two dates, the first 1974 and the last April 30, 1979, without any indication of the reason for the disparity. The final date could simply be regarded as the date on which the author completed the text, it might be argued, without any further importance being attached to it. Although this is not a device Stuart uses with regularity - its two previous appearances were in The Flowering Cross, (1950) and The Pillar of Cloud, (1948) - that might be an acceptable explanation, were it not that the date does not end the book since there are another three pages of material that follow, and that the 30th April has a personal significance to Stuart, since his birthday and that of his hero, H, was on the night of 29th April.

1 The sense of brotherhood of enemy soldiers, of course, pervades writing about the First World War, only in the rather more mundane sense of a shared humanity. See, for example, E. M. Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front; Edmund Blunden, Undertones of War; Siegfried Sassoon, The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston; Robert Graves, Goodbye To All That; and the works of Henry Williamson for a rather different response.

Instead, the dates may be regarded as fulfilling several functions. First, they indicate the impossibility of trying to ascribe a date to any experience and by implication raise the problems associated both with autobiographical writing and using biographical structures. Secondly, they indicate the sort of elusive relationship which exists between Stuart and his characters: the 30th April was, for Stuart and H, the first day of their physical lives while, if it is accepted as the date which Grimes appended to the passage after writing it, it can be taken as the first day in his new spiritual life. This would not agree with the time-scheme of the passage, which is headed 1974 and speaks of three years passing but it is difficult to make that an objection since the impossibility of ascribing chronology is what the novel is about. Thirdly, it evokes H and through him, others of Stuart's heroes, thus uniting this work with others in Stuart's corpus. Fourthly, by its joining of Stuart and his fictional characters it implies that the relationship between art and life must be questioned. Finally, if this is a quite mistaken interpretation of what is not more than an authorial convention, then it testifies to Stuart's legerdemain in manipulating his form so that the reader, too, becomes an accomplice in questioning what belongs to the unreal and what to the real world.

The reliability of memory, too, is used to raise this question. Here, van Gogh's letter is attributed as having been written from St. Rémy whereas it was written from Auvers-sur-Oise, after the artist had left the asylum,[1] just as elsewhere in the novel the sort of slight errors of fact that memory can produce, question the nature of fact itself. For example, Grimes remembers Leonardo's portrait of a woman holding an ermine as being of Isabella d'Este, while most commentaries

1 See The Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh, p. 298.

agree that it is of Cecilia Gallerani;[1] and there are frequent mis-spellings in the names of horses and jockeys, as Alan Ross points out in his review of the novel:

> it is Smirke, not Smirk, Mme Suzy Volterra's Amour Drake, not Armour Drake, was second in the 1949 Derby, the Australian jockey was Rae, not Ray Johnstone, it is the Prix du not de Jockey-Club, Mill Reef beat Linden Tree, not Linden Trees, at Epsom in 1971. [2]

Elsewhere, dates given for some sections of the book are contradictory, so that the following headings occur:

> Sunday, September 28, 1971
> Monday, September 26, 1971
> Tuesday and Wednesday, September 28, 29, 1971 [3]

These are unlikely to be simple typographical errors since the form of the novel is so unusual that these headings would inevitably attract a great deal of attention while the work was in proof.[4] It must be accepted, therefore, that this is another example of the past being shuffled 'thoroughly and repeatedly, by memory'[5] and is thus another device to point up the problem of recording what really happens.

Internal referencing in the novel is extensive, therefore, with one part of the novel suggesting another part of it, setting up what might be termed a tintinabulation of meaning, so that one event, setting, or character must be seen in terms of the others which it suggests or echoes. Style and form unite here, the unity produced by motif, theme and aesthetic being consolidated by the extensive cross-referencing and

1 See, for example, Kenneth Clark, Leonardo da Vinci, (London, 1939), p. 48-50.
2 Alan Ross, 'Notes' London Magazine, New Series, 21, no. 1-2 (April-May 1981), 12-13, p. 13.
3 The High Consistory, p. 287; 293; 302.
4 A copy of the uncorrected proofs of the novel, made available privately by Mr. Stuart, carried the same 'errors'.
5 The High Consistory, p. 8.

lack of chronology which encourages the novel to be regarded as a single expression rather than a movement from one point to another. This is emphasised by the fact that the passage considered here is contemporary with the Introductory Note with which the novel opens, that its setting is the same and that both refer to the air-crash and the journey made with a broken leg. The journey recalls too the opening of the poem given earlier in the novel:

> By plane, bus and forced march
> Across a city after midnight
> With nothing to guide me but what I guessed
> Was your candlelit window amid the electric ones [1]

This is echoed as well by the description of Julio Bailey's journey, 'by train, hired car and sloop'[2] and by the movement of the novel from one location to another, as well as its hero's spiritual journey. Journeying takes place in time, too: Grimes's imagination transports him to the flat he lived in in Berlin, and superimposes an imaginary visit from the British Secret Service onto the naturalistic, recalled setting. Through the agency of imagination, which here is perhaps better called meditation or spiritual insight, he is able to speak in person to Ste. Thérëse of Lisieux; a simpler cross-reference of periods is made by the description of the blouse worn by Claire in 1971, 'her Hungarian blouse, loosely gathered by a silver cord in a semi-circle from her shoulders'[3] and that worn by Nicole in 1950:

> She came around midnight in a tight silver-lamé skirt and hand-made Russian blouse with full sleeves and a golden cord threaded through the neckline. I understood how important the costumes of their women must have been for the Renaissance masters. [4]

1 The High Consistory, p. 160.
2 The High Consistory, p. 247.
3 The High Consistory, p. 177.
4 The High Consistory, p. 114-5.

The complexity of style is so developed that even such an obvious comparison begs for elaboration: into the sexual innuendo of 'she came', appropriate since Grimes and Nicole have had intercourse while she was elaborately dressed as an extra frisson, as Grimes and Claire do elsewhere;[1] the way that suggests the allusion to 'Sacred and Profane Love',[2] made immediately after and illustrated by Titian's painting of that name of his mistress in two poses; the deliberate reversal of interpretation of the painting, so that the semi-nude representing profane love 'reminds me of the virgin martyrs'[3] while the richly dressed figure is regarded as almost perversely sensual; and the relationship between that painting and the one by Fuseli alluded to immediately after the description of Claire, 'Two Lesbians Looking in a Mirror'.[4] Such an elaboration on that and other similar passages in the novel - the two 'icons' of the beetle trapped in the glass portrait of Ste. Thérèse, indicating the confluence of time and the agency of chance,[5] and the small inset painting of the Christ-ocelot on the portrait of Anne Breffny[6] - would produce an unbalanced analysis on the overall intentions of the novel. Instead, they must be taken as examples of the constant interiorisation which is vital to Stuart's developed style, and which is exemplified in particular here in his idea that 'certain experiences coincide outside time . . . an ancient legend can be as actual as the moment's preoccupation'.[7] It too

1 The High Consistory, p. 179.
2 The High Consistory, p. 115.
3 The High Consistory, p. 115.
4 The High Consistory, p. 177.
5 The High Consistory, p. 154.
6 The High Consistory, p. 125.
7 The High Consistory, p. 223. See also p. 271, Grime's imaginary projection of himself into the St. Petersburg of Dostoyevsky.

expresses this notion that the device of a painter-narrator is used for, since art can portray together events which take place in different periods, as in the example Grimes gives of 'Gauguin's painting of the Breton women in white-winged bonnets, who visualising the subject of the sermon they have just heard, see Jacob wrestling with the angel on the green lawn of the churchyard'.[1] Unless literature is to be fantastic, however, it can only juxtapose events rather than present them side by side, since its printed form imposes a sequence of apprehension on the reader from which the single statement of a painting is freed. By superimposing one event on another, dislocating chronology, and producing a series of re-echoings through the novel, Stuart is attempting to free himself from those restrictions of narrative while at the same time insisting on a progression from one state to another. This is possible because of the nature of the progress which is a spiritual development rather than a development of plot: plot as it is generally conceived hardly exists outside the growth to redemption of the protagonist, and setting, therefore, becomes symbolic as much as actual. It is the triumph of the novel, perhaps, that setting and events remain realistic in spite of this: and this serves, too, to reiterate the notion that it is in the simple and the mundane that spiritual force can be found. The High Consistory, therefore, provides Stuart's most refined expression of that sense of unity, of the oneness of all things, which is basic to that spiritual force, since this is propagated actively by its extensive interiorisation, internal references and allusions, so that hardly any paragraph can be read without it suggesting some other part of the novel and providing mutual contrast and comparison. Working both with this and against it is form; working with it, because of the shuffled-diary-entry format used,

1 The High Consistory, p. 223.

destroying calendar chronology; working against it as a necessary counterpoint, because the structure must have a physical start and end, first page and last page, and because it charts a progression which may defy temporal chronicling but which is a progression nonetheless. The novel itself partakes of the unity and harmony, the search for which forms its central theme, and meaning and form are interdependent to a degree which is much higher than anywhere else in his work.

* * * * * * *

This close scrutiny of a part of Stuart's most recent work offers one fruitful way of assessing developments which can be traced elsewhere in his novels. This indicates that they cannot be considered entirely apart from each other and that further insights can be gained by examining the relationships which exists in his work as a whole. In his discussion of Stuart's fiction, W. J. McCormack says:

> We can isolate two groups of novels. Firstly there is a trilogy (in effect though not in design) - Pigeon Irish (1932), The Coloured Dome (1932) and Try the Sky (1933). Here the theme is ostensibly of civil war, or of violence involving treason, suspicion and disappointment . . . two figures - the humiliated because unsacrificed Garry, and the bleeding female Christ - mark the powerful antipodes of Stuart's early fiction. In the second group of novels, The Pillar of Cloud (1948), Redemption (1949) and The Flowering Cross (1950) the setting is essentially continental, though in Redemption the theme is recollected through the fate of a murderer in a provincial Irish town . . . Turning to Blacklist Section H, we can see that Stuart's development has been as much one of restatement, rediscovery and clarification as of dramatic advances in theme or style. 1

His intention here is to provide 'an elementary grasp'[2] of Stuart's fiction; in a more detailed analysis such clear-cut divisions do not fit in well with the notion of a corpus in which certain themes, motifs and

1 W. J. McCormack, 'Francis Stuart: The Recent Fiction', in The Irish Novel in Our Time, edited by P. Rafroidi and M. Harmon (University of Lille, 1975-6), 175-185, p. 176-7.
2 'Francis Stuart: The Recent Fiction', p. 176.

artistic preoccupations are being constantly redefined and extended. On the other hand, it does indicate that there are elements linking Stuart's work outside those major stylistic and aesthetic considerations. The connection between Pigeon Irish and The Coloured Dome seems strong because both end in the humiliation of their hero. It is as though Garry Delea has taken up the fight where Frank Allen left it, in an Ireland now governed by Malone and his confrères, with Catherine transformed into the rebel leader Tulloolagh. How far Try the Sky fits in with that pair is debatable: it might be argued convincingly that the novel which followed it, Glory, provides it with a better companion. Both are concerned with a power which appears to be only military, but whose purpose is transcendent, and both span the world in tremendous flights of fancy. Their scale and the unusual nature of the forces which operate in them provide a sense of preoccupation revisited, reworked using quite different locations and events but nevertheless possessing mutual tones and concerns. Similarly, The Pillar of Cloud and Redemption share a common feeling, so that a full appreciation of the one seems to require a reading of the other: the first deals with a memory of life before the war and the way in which that is altered by the war; the second with a memory of war's destruction and a reassertion of the possibility of new life it can bring. Quite clearly, they are separate novels, but equally clearly they beg to be read in the context of each other. Again, the fusion between them is such that it is difficult to see quite how The Flowering Cross stands with them rather than with, perhaps, novels such as Good Friday's Daughter, which follows it and which also deals with a return home, betrayal, and an endurance found in failure.

What is established, nonetheless, is that there is an extra interconnection between certain novels, in the sense they provide of a scene or an experience revisited and extended. The effect is not only

one of extension but also of consolidation. Pigeon Irish supplies a background to The Coloured Dome when the two are read together and although it is a background of feeling rather than fact it adds to the versimilitude of the later novel by confirming its attitudes and themes. In a sense, the earlier novel supplies a 'memory' for the later one, a frame of reference which is not made explicit but which evokes certain responses and acceptances in the reader. This is at its most obvious when it appears in novels which are chronologically side by side and where there are such broad correspondences as there are between Pigeon Irish and The Coloured Dome, and Try the Sky and Glory. Elsewhere, however, it is refined into the occasional reappearance of certain small details - a minor setting, a striking phrase, a small, developing concern - which evoke their earlier use and add depth and cohesion to the corpus. The terraced suburban house in Highgate in Julie, its 'cheaply pretentious furniture, its minute orderliness, its aggressive cleanliness, its standardisation, which struck a chill of horror into the spacious, untidy, intolerant heart of Julie'[1] recalls Dominic's reaction to the Dublin suburban villa in The White Hare,[2] because of its mean ugliness, crowdedness, and its sense of trapping something which belongs to wilder, more open places. A phrase in Try the Sky is recalled by one in the High Consistory: in Try the Sky Carlotta says:

> 'I won't ever laugh at that passage in the Death of Ivan Iliitch any more, when he suddenly says when he is dying: "Now I am on the wing." I have seen how that really happens, and without dying' [3]

The phrase intermingles both the spiritual journey and the physical journey in Graf's plane, The Spirit. Both are recalled by Grimes's

1 Julie, p. 168.
2 The White Hare, p. 190-194.
3 Try the Sky, p. 181.

misquote of 'I knew we were on the wing'[1] in The High Consistory when he is flying across America with Robert Banim. A more marked set of references, linking Stuart's fictional worlds with each other and with those of others, are the references to a gold ring, in The Pillar of Cloud, Black List, Section H and The High Consistory. In The Pillar of Cloud, Dominic possesses a gold ring which he tries to sell on the black market but which is stolen by Lisette, and returned to him by Halka, to whom he gives it.[2] In Black List, Section H, H buys 'a piece of gold made up in a thick, crude-looking ring for one and a half thousand marks'[3] which he intends to use as a negotiable currency and which Halka wears. A similar ring, bought by Grimes on the black market, is mentioned in The High Consistory;[4] there, however, the ring stolen by Katusha in Tolstoy's Resurrection[5] has been described earlier, and the two rings are linked, therefore, in the mind of the reader. What is more, it becomes impossible not to reconsider Lisette's theft in The Pillar of Cloud in the light of this new allusion, so that not only are Stuart's three novels interlinked by the ring but they are also linked, however tenuously, with Tolstoy's novel. The journeys undertaken by Dominic and Halka and H and Halka become suggestive of Katusha's journey to Siberia and Nekhlyudov's following there, and thus suggestive of themes such as guilt and innocence, and a relationship which transcends simple sexuality.

Stuart's most recent fiction is rich in this sort of cross-referencing. The High Consistory, especially, contains elements that seem to refer, quite deliberately, to his earlier work: a sign with 'éloignement' written on it recalls a similar sign and sense of

1 The High Consistory, p. 139.
2 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 15, 16, 40-41.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 366; see also p. 379, 385.
4 The High Consistory, p. 205.
5 The High Consistory, p. 59-61.

foreboding in The Pilgrimage;[1] the phrase 'la grande habitude de voir' is used, as it is in Redemption;[2] there is a more explicit description of the boyhood sexual experience described in Memorial[3] as having to 'make do with a horsehair mattress folded in two'; and the incident in Berlin in which a china cabinet is accidentally smashed appears as it does in Black List, Section H[4]. The effect of this sort of complex interweaving is two-fold. First, it increases the cohesiveness of Stuart's novels and encourages their acceptance as a single expression, unifying them outside the confines of chronology. Secondly, it suggests that background is lived anew, that the significance of certain minor preoccupations changes, or yields something different, when they are re-examined. Aesthetically, this is one with Stuart's notion of the effect of memory and the interpenetration of real and unreal, which he explores in his late fiction: these minor concerns mark what he calls in Memorial[5] 'the meridian between myth and oblivion', the point described in A Hole in the Head[6] as that where 'real and dream worlds overlapped'. A good example of these concerns can be found in his short story, 'The Water-Garden'. The garden is a fish tank the narrator owned as a boy, containing 'five tiny fish . . . tiny, dust-coloured, though momentarily gleaming creatures'[7] which no-one but he can see, and which the son of the old man who gave them to him believes to be a practical joke - 'the world-renowned Japanese invisible Kra fish'[8]. The child, however,

1 The High Consistory, p. 43; The Pilgrimage, p. 71.
2 The High Consistory, p. 128; Redemption, p. 30.
3 The High Consistory, p. 61; Memorial, p. 259.
4 The High Consistory, p. 18; Black List, Section H, p. 337-8; see also Victors and Vanquished, p. 72. For further correspondences see also the girl hitchhiker in Memorial, p. 49 and A Hole in the Head, p. 57; the Russian plane, Victors and Vanquished, p. 201 and Black List, Section H, p. 370; the embroidery case, Good Friday's Daughter, p. 14-15 and Black List, Section H, p. 185.
5 Memorial, p. 33.
6 A Hole in the Head, p. 25.
7 Francis Stuart 'The Water-Garden', p. 213.
8 'The Water Garden' p. 215.

perceives them because 'his intuition is the sharper just because his mind isn't cluttered up with a lot of information, either useless or untrue'[1] and he finds in them 'a state of reconciliation and relief'.[2] To the narrator remembering this water-garden, it represents a truth outside intellect or fame, offers an alternative reality, and provides a source of strength and hope to set against the trivial values of society. Whether or not the fish were real is never stated; the story opens with the words 'As a child I spent a season in hell, along with Rimbaud'[3] and the reference suggests the primacy of a disordering of the senses advocated in Une Saison En Enfer. References to criminality and spiritual themes, too, bring the short-story well within the major preoccupations of Stuart's novels: at the same time, however, the story also gathers together the symbols of gardens and wells which occur in those novels. In Good Friday's Daughter, for example, Mark irrigates the garden, clears away briars, until 'the new green sward grew over the wilderness';[4] in Angels of Providence, Samuel and Mrs Morgan clear the area around the wall to uncover 'the small pool of absolute quiet that they had both come so far to find'.[5] These two symbols of new life are brought together by Herra in Memorial with the water-garden she builds in the aquarium, as a preface to her and Sugrue's first hesitant sexual contact: 'It was our first exploratory walk in our Garden of Eden that you'd perhaps been prefiguring with your water garden'.[6] Here, there are tragic undertones to the symbol, since Sugrue and Herra are to be expelled from their Eden by Herra's death. In the short-story, however,

1 'The Water Garden' p. 215.
2 'The Water Garden' p. 214.
3 'The Water Garden' p. 213.
4 Good Friday's Daughter, p. 169.
5 Angels of Providence, p. 120. See also Black List, Section H, p. 179: 'The imagination had escaped momentarily and was refreshing itself at the cool deep wells of Galilee; and The High Consistory, where a well and a garden figure, p. 201, 309.
6 Memorial, p. 63.

this tragic symbol is redefined as a more explicitly mystical one, requiring intuitive rather than intellectual understanding, and what has been a minor symbol, providing an unintrusive linking between different novels, is re-expressed and thus made examinable at greater length. The symbol central to the story would stand on its own: but in the context of Stuart's other novels added significance accretes to it and it also encourages a sense of integration in the corpus.

Stuart's other short stories make a similar contribution to the unity of his work, anticipating or reiterating the content or feeling of his novels. 'The Isles of the Blest' (1934) and 'The Bandit' (1938) are of interest largely because they contain elements which echo novels. 'The Isles of the Blest' concerns a Russian pilot who flies to Canada with a young girl, in a seaplane which he usually uses for giving tourists ten minute trips. The sense of spiritual exaltation in the flight recalls that of the flight in Try the Sky; the idea of spanning huge distances recalls Glory; and the sexual undertones, risk, and the fact that the pilot is Russian, recall Coral's flight in In Search of Love. 'The Bandit' concerns a small girl, named Julie, who believes that their lodger is a daring thief and adulates him for it; when she realises he is only a sneak-thief, she steals a bank payroll and plants it in his suitcase so that when he is arrested for petty crime the police, and her young brother, respect the thief for his unsuspected daring. Although the narrative is quite different the elements of celebration of criminality and sympathy for it by a young girl, recall the novel Julie. The interest of these two stories is limited to their validation of other parts of Stuart's work and their curiosity value. On the other hand, 'Minou' (1959) provides an interesting example of a theme which is a forerunner of a longer treatment. An elderly night-watchman visits the Zoo regularly and forms a special bond of feeling with an ocelot there. Unable to bear its captivity any longer, he saws

through the bars of its cage and with the ocelot's instinctive complicity, escapes with it in a canvas bag. He moves to a cottage in a deserted part of the country where, at first, he and the animal live in harmony. Eventually, though, the ocelot returns to the wild. One day, the old man, whose health is now failing, makes his way to a clearing in the woods where he believes he has sometimes glimpsed Minou, and waits patiently:

> I kept reminding myself, it's high time, old man, you roused yourself and hobbled home to supper and your proper bed! But I stayed on; the quietude was so deep that I hardly dared to break in on it, or on the dreams that haunted me.
>
> At last there came the particular one for which perhaps I had been waiting. Out of the shadows that had crept up across the small clearing padded the familiar form. Noiseless, itself a shadow, it was beside me for a moment. There was, as that first time long ago, the strange little shock of roughness and warmth against my cheek. Nothing had stirred, the absolute quiet only deepened. 1

The content, of course, is later re-worked into an episode in The High Consistory, where Claire steals the ocelot. Of more interest, perhaps, is the passage quoted is the intermingling of dream and reality that is so typical of Stuart's later style, with its reference to dreams and its constant qualifications - 'hardly dared', 'perhaps' - that suggest that the narrator himself is no longer omniscient. The ocelot in The High Consistory is directly equated with Christ in a way in which Minou is not. Nevertheless, Minou offers a redemption to the old man through their mutual freeing and their harmony, which means that when death comes it is in terms of Minou, 'the strange little shock of roughness and warmth' that it arrives. This, too, is typical of Stuart's style, the way in which vital experiences are described in terms of familiar objects or states, to suggest a link between the personal and intimate

1 'Minou' p. 158.
2 'Minou' is also the name given to Iseult's cat in Black List, Section H, p. 16.
3 'Minou', p. 158.

and the universal and eternal, and to allow imaginative extension of them by the reader rather than limiting them by greater exposition.[1] Finally, there is a shift from the narrator's voice to a more impersonal one for the final sentence, indicating that from an objective point of view nothing had happened - there had been no return of the ocelot in any physical shape - and accentuating the intimacy of the experience at the same time as it distances the reader from it. Again, this insistence that the reader move his focus from the main subject in order to understand it better is typical of Stuart's developed style: at the end of The High Consistory, for example, there is a similar shift from Grimes's experience to that of van Gogh, insisting that Grimes's state of mind be understood through van Gogh's: 'I don't dare to define it, but it helps me understand what Van Gogh had in his tormented head when he wrote of his pictures to his brother from St. Rémy: "Some of them may retain their calm come the Deluge"'.[2] 'Minou', then, provides a useful miniaturisation of some of the stylistic concerns of Stuart's later works. The same can be said for 'The Stormy Petrel' (1973) and to a lesser extent, 'Jacob' (1971). 'Jacob's' stylistic interest lies in its deliberate re-interpretation of part of the Biblical story of Jacob in modern terms: instead of keeping sheep, Jacob McGregor trains racehorses; instead of meeting Rachel at a well he meets Pieta at the well of a lift-shaft - she operates the lift. This imaginative interpretation of Biblical themes recurs throughout Stuart's work; initially it is to be found in motifs such as the woman-Christ but in his later work it is extended to fictional reworkings of Biblical events, such as those which run throughout Memorial[3] - Herra's description of Mary Magdalene 'working in the nightclub', for instance

1 See, for example, the falling star, The Pillar of Cloud, p. 232; the old lady, A Hole in the Head, p. 215.
2 The High Consistory, p. 317.
3 Memorial, p. 182.

- or Robert Banim's story in which 'This gangster, Boss or Joss, is strung up on some sort of totem pole'[1] in The High Consistory. In their turn, these are linked with imaginative speculation about literature, both its writers - Emily Brontë, Dostoyevsky - and its characters - Sonia and Katusha, for instance - which is a further minor characteristic of Stuart's insistence on the creative power of the imagination. 'The Stormy Petrel' provides further insights into his style. Apparently the plot is a discussion of whether a writer who prides himself on not being part of any socially acceptable literary circle will attend a party at which he may be offered the chance of some high award - perhaps, it is implied, the Nobel Prize. In fact, the narrative deliberately ends without his decision being stated and with a direct challenge to the reader's understanding: 'Who still wants to know the outcome of the story? Anyone who does hasn't bothered to read it'.[2] The refusal forces the reader to concentrate on the symbol central to the story, the small bird that the narrator sees flying above the waves on his boat-trip to the mainland on the way to the party:

> Flitting down one of the shadowy valleys overtaking us I saw this small, black spectre, soon to be the only heart-tick and drop of blood-warmth as the dusk fell on the salt desolation when we were gone.
>
> Omens, warnings, come to those who in their dilemma seek them with a pure heart. But also to those who, no matter how heart-sullied, have the gift of turning make-believe into reality; can make themselves feel and believe what they know is true.
>
> This little fowl of the species that thirst-crazed, ship-wrecked manners used to call Mother Carey's chickens (as they were transported perhaps to summer evenings at home) was communicating to me in my need: Where I go you will have once to venture, in the chill gales that blow day and night in these parts. Or, again: No impedimenta hung round the neck nor fastened to the wing-tips are anything but fatal in these latitudes. [3]

Again, there is a sense of a microcosm of the concerns which are

1 The High Consistory, p. 150.
2 'The Stormy Petrel', p. 21.
3 'The Stormy Petrel', p. 20-21.

expressed at greater length in Stuart's novels. The petrel represents life in a desolation which becomes spiritual as well as physical; insight can come through the use of the creative imagination; to join a consensus is fatal to that imagination; self-sufficiency must be sought within; life reposes in the simple and humble - the image of chickens - which is a direct link with the universal life - the 'blood-warmth'. The bird, too, encourages identification with other significant references to birds in Stuart's works especially the doves associated with the ark motif, the pigeons in Pigeon Irish, and other lesser references such as, for example the blackbird whose song seemed to H to carry 'the echo of past tranquillity' and to be 'an obscure comment on his future'.[2]

The overall tendency of Stuart's style is to integrate his work, to increase its internal referencing and through that to find a greater interiorisation of experience. This is reflected in the increasing subtlety of narrative. For example, in The White Hare Dominic's sense of impending death and sudden, mystical revelation is described from the point of view of an exterior narrator:

> He has taken his farewells. He has made his little bow to an earth on which it seemed he had appeared ten years too late. All the same he had gathered his treasure. And when he whispered her name over and over it was not in anguish or despair but with an inflection of surprise at the miracle that had made her his bride. 3

This sort of explicit statement is not necessary in his later work. Instead, there is an internal referencing and use of allusion which interiorises experience, presenting it as part of the overall progress

1 'The Stormy Petrel', p. 20-21.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 301. See also the blackbird in Germany, p. 349; the starlings H recalls, p. 357; and the description of the young H, p. 37, as a 'clumsy youth with a fringe of burnished hair like a hawk's wing folded low on one side of his forehead'.
3 The White Hare, p. 312.

of the hero rather than as a point of arrival and thus suggesting it is part of his overall consciousness rather than an end to which he has been manipulated. H's ending in the prison cell, his waiting for 'a howl of final despair or . . . certain words that he didn't yet know how to listen for'[1] is the culmination of accumulated experience - in prison in the Civil War, in solitude reading the works of mystics, on the retreat and in Berlin, and searching constantly for expression of all that has happened to him in the novel. It avoids the limiting self-containment of the passage from The White Hare because it has a diffeent focus and it is convincing as an interiorised experience where the earlier passage is not.

* * * * * * *

Form works with style to produce this interiorisation. Paradoxically, as the form of Stuart's fiction becomes more objective so the work itself becomes more intimate. The seeds of this appear in the early work: the form of Things To Live For is, ostensibly, a set of notes for an autobiography, that is, a group of facts and reminiscences which have yet to be worked into as objective as possible an account of their writer's life. In fact, the work is an intense declaration of personal values, an addressing of the author to himself rather than to an audience. The form allows a greater concentration on fundamentals than was available to him in his novels; the same is true of The Angel of Pity, classified by his publisher as philosophy, which provides a close examination of suffering, compassion and hope because its discussion subjugates fiction to a scenario rather than a detailed plot. The significance of the Second World War for Stuart as an artist was that it allowed him to make concrete and realistic those concerns which has previously been extendable only by a symbolism that could, at

1 Black List, Section H, p. 425.

points, lose touch with the realism in which they should have been based. The Pillar of Cloud does not require the fantastic background of novels like Glory since it records a real suffering which has been so intense as to have universal qualities of itself. Outside the influence of that setting, however, there are certain problems: in novels such as Good Friday's Daughter, The Pilgrimage and Angels of Providence, there is again a sense of exteriorisation, of the manipulation of character, events and setting rather than their convergence in a single expression as they do in The Pillar of Cloud, Redemption, and to a lesser extent, The Flowering Cross and The Chariot. The problem seems to have been that for some reason Stuart found the form of the traditional realistic or formulaic novel too confining. This may have been because convention demands that its contents be recognised as fictitious, in a way which was not conducive to the sort of truths Stuart was trying to express: if the general content of the novel is accepted as a fiction then points of heightened awareness - dreams, visions - become fantastic, unbelievable; and that is clearly undesirable when the purpose of the novel is to reveal those moments as a higher reality. It is possible, of course, to use certain devices to overcome this difficulty, such as introducing these elements into the novel as a piece of higher imagination, as, for example, Dostoyevsky introduces 'The Grand Inquisitor' section of The Brothers Karamazov as a poem by Ivan. This can be done only sparingly, however, and when the authorial purpose is to commingle real and imaginary throughout a work it is not a useful method. Instead, Stuart adopted different forms; first, he used a biographical form for Black List, Section H; then, he turned to a 'report' form for Memorial and A Hole in the Head; and finally, he modified that into a disintegrated, possibly incomplete report form for The High Consistory.

The effect of these three changes is to suggest an increasing objectivity, a greater insistence on the gathering and analysis of facts

to find solid, concrete truth. The closer the analysis, however, the more it is clear that no such truth exists in these terms, that on close examination truth can be expressed only in terms which are imaginative, allusive and complex.

The suggestive language necessary for accuracy of meaning can be investigated through a form which provides a contrasting structure against which that language can be measured. In Black List, Section H, for example, the biographer of H moves from charting his physical, intellectual and emotional development to acknowledging that he is creating 'the legend of H' and the novel ends in a sense of uncertainty that is also a recognition of the primacy of possibilities and alternatives over certainty and hard fact. Memorial opens with a categorical statement that it is a report:

> Herra, this is the report I once promised you,
> How start? With something neutral, which isn't easy to hit on where every object seems highly charged. What about the old Rolls? It had taken me half across Europe to your mother's house in the elegant, suburban street. Recognising car and driver as from another world (a matter of suspicion seeing she had already come up against another such refugee in you?) she guessed it was the expected visitor and came to greet him with outstretched hand. Which I hesitated to take in my journey - grimed one. 1

The style of the report, however, runs counter to its form. The difficulty of neutrality - of even finding a starting point - is acknowledged and in the event, the car selected to open the report is later developed into part of the powerful ark-symbolism in the novel. The interpolated question adds a further dimension of uncertainty; and finally the narrative convention is destroyed by the shifts from first

1 Memorial, p. 7. See also the similar deliberate ambiguity in the opening of A Hole in The Head: 'June 5th. Gilde left the house at Andilly and went to the Paris flat. A casual diary entry about a domestic arrangement made to obviate the long drive in to work?
No, The beginning of a report on the end of one part of my life and the start of another'.

to third person by the narrator in talking of himself - 'came to greet him . . . I hesitated'. This prepares the way for the imaginative insight of the novel, the linking of Herra with the Hare, and with other sufferers, dead and alive - John Clare, Blake, John Lodwick, Mary M and the lamb of God[1] - and the development of motif. The report-form contains the language of the novel, its restraint allowing greater freedom of expression because it provides a more formal mode. It allows a movement between the imaginative and the factual, the one redefining the other, as in the description of the means of Herra's death:

> the corporal's desolate instrument joined in with a shattering clamour, the antiphonal response to the first sharp burst of diabolic verse of this Vespers, of which one of the obscene words-made-steel had pierced your tender flesh . . .
>
> The tear in your belly was oozing wet but there was almost no flow of blood. If I hadn't seen what a high-velocity bullet did to a lump of gelatine I might have hoped the wound wasn't a fatal one. 2

This redefinition of the imaginative in terms of the factual extends them both; the fatal wound is both an injury by a bullet and an evil destruction of all the spiritual values of compassion, tender care, and love. The truth of the event lies in the combination of both expressions and it is this which the report form facilitates. Similarly, this imaginative flexibility is used in A Hole in the Head to introduce Emily Brontë and to make that introduction credible, if astonishing. The report form authenticates that which would otherwise be fantastic and by its apparent measured chronicling of events suggests that those events actually took place. It is not entirely self-sufficient, however. In the case of Emily Brontë's introduction, the reporter suggests that she was after all perhaps just an illusion, sometimes a total hallucination, sometimes a confusion with another,

1 Memorial, see p. 203-5.
2 Memorial, p. 253.

real, person. The surprise at the end of the novel, when the old lady asks after her, therefore, is the greater: and because we have been disposed to believe in the general veracity of the reporter we are disposed to believe the old lady saw Emily Brontë since Shane does not question it. By placing responsibility for belief in Emily onto the old lady, the narrator can distance himself, can simply report what was said without prejudicing his own credibility by reporting on it. Here, Stuart is using a similar technique as that used by Thomas Mann in Doctor Faustus, where Zeitblom presents Leverkuhn's dialogue with the devil as a manuscript written by Leverkuhn himself, which he simply reproduces and about which he hardly dare speculate. The High Consistory, however, takes this a step further, by exploding the report format itself. The narrator says that 'The record of a lifetime had been lightly shuffled by chance, as is the past, more thoroughly and repeatedly, by memory'.[1] The structure of the report is still there, in essence, since the various sections were devised originally to record his life, through notebooks and diaries. However, the novel is subject to two forms of organisation. One is the form in which chronology is disordered but events are linked by common elements, allusion, a developing insight that depends on hindsight as well as present events - the form of the novel as it is published. The other is chronological form, the supposed original order of material, traceable because of the dates which head most sections. The device is an admirable one: the almost unbelievable can be moderated into credibility simply by putting it in context with the prosaic, and suggesting that they were originally part of the same account in which their relations to each other would have been clearer as far as narrative is concerned. Stylistic allusion and interconnection is then all that is required to link the two: there

1 The High Consistory, p. 7-8.

is no need to shuffle off responsibility for events such as Ste. Thérèse's racing forecast onto a third person: chance has done it all, made imperfect the record that should have been perfect. What is more, by using memory as an analogy for chance, it is possible to question the validity of the objective report, to suggest that it is as likely to be inaccurate and distorted as memory is, and that validity lies outside formal structures and inside imagination ones. At the same time, of course, the formal structure of a disordered report is being used to make this point.

Developments in form, then, have an increasingly liberating effect on Stuart's style. A greater degree of allusion and internal referencing becomes possible than in even the most developed symbolism of early novels such as Pigeon Irish, and a high degree of integration between themes and motif is achieved. A greater variety of expression is made available too, since continuity is maintained by the form rather than being the responsibility of style. Here, his interest in poetry and drama becomes clear and relevant. Although Stuart's early literary life was as a poet, he has suggested that the reason for his change from poetry to fiction was because:

> my real interests were far more certain experiences - very often personal experiences, human relationships, human activities - which are certainly not best communicated through poetry. I'm surprised I didn't realize early that basically my whole attitude to communicating whatever insights I have was that of the writer of fiction, not of the poet, although I have written poems since. 1

In spite of the change of orientation, however, Stuart continued to use poetry in his novels - in The Flowering Cross and Victors and Vanquished for example - as a means of encapsulating, in refined form, the central concerns and feelings of the novels. Louis writes to Alyse:

1 'An Interview', p. 24.

Your body is the healing cross, the woman-cross
Flowering and without nails,
Planted in this bare corner.
Ripen now, in darkness, in this night
And bear the fruit, my darkling.

* * * * * * * *

Bear me the night out of your belly,
And the day out of your hands;
Let me drink the beginning of death -
All I can yet swallow of it - out of your blood,
And your blind hands shelter me from myself. 1

The poems appear at the start of the novel and prefigure Alyse's abortion, Louis's unfaithfulness, their reconciliation, and the new life they both find, while also extending these into universal values by expressing them as 'healing', 'darkness', 'death' and 'shelter'. The poem in The High Consistory performs a similar function there, as well as providing a focus for other journeys with which the novel deals. Elsewhere, it is possible to discern similar preoccupations between novels and poems published separately. The incident in Julie in which Celestine, the tortoise, is half-eaten by rats, is recalled by the poem 'Broken Tortoise' with its reference to 'That ravenous violence',[2] for instance; and Dominic's sense of being isolated in Berlin, with Ireland as the source of sustenance from which Uncle Egan's food parcels come, in The Pillar of Cloud, is suggested by the poem 'Ireland' where the country becomes an ark. More importantly, perhaps, this background of poetry manifests itself in dense, highly imaginative prose images. Memorial, for instance, offers a sequence of images of escape:

Yes, in our small and private manner we were reliving the original adventure in one of its many variations. The last train was moving out

1 The Flowering Cross, p. 32. In the novel it is not made clear whether these are two poems or separate stanzas of the same one. See also Victors and Vanquished, p.237 for a further use of a poem in a novel.
2 Francis Stuart, 'Three Poems', Capuchin Annual (Dublin, 1945-6), p. 304.

of the doomed city, the bird had flown from under the net of the fowler, the ark was lifting from the sodden earth. 1

The single sentence contains images of destruction of first human life, then animal life, and finally the whole world, with the slender escapes from them united by the image of the ark which contained both forms of life. Its intensity and cohesion suggests the sense of unity basic to the idea of redemption; this is extended to include the psyche by H's pondering over the nature of death by bombing which he conceives in a combination of bird-image and scientific terms:

H tried to think his way through the mystery of the apparent extinction of the psyche - one of the names the mind, looking into its mirror, gives itself - by means of high explosive.
Was it a fledgling that couldn't survive the tearing down of its biochemical nest? Or a wild and wary bird that had flown from the tree before the great bang that never reached the ear? 2

There is an ambiguity here which is more common in poetry than prose, in the paradox of H trying to understand the nature of his psyche while already accepting that it is self-reflecting and thus impenetrable. Man and animal are united in the bird image; they are linked to a view of man which is an imaginative exploration of science - 'its bio-chemical nest'; and this is connected with a sense of eternity in the image of the 'wild and wary bird that had flown from the tree'. This linking of science and imagination has produced some of the most liberating images and ideas in Stuart's later work, suggesting as it does a unity between man and the cosmos, and between the material and the spiritual worlds. In Memorial, for instance, Sugrue translates a scientific expression of man's unity into a spiritual one when he remembers 'the same code of

1 Memorial p. 59.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 377-8. See also p. 273, 369, 375 for other expressions of the psyche in scientific terms.

triplets of bases is used to define the proteins in all organisms: we're all one flesh',[1] while in A Hole in the Head Sugrue expresses a new feeling of shared vision by saying

> I believed . . . that here and there undreamed-of relationships are beginning to form. Clusters of new cells of perception are ripening like minute grapes on certain spino-cerebral vinestocks in a kind of compensatory process. [2]

Images such as these are particularly important in The High Consistory, where they provide one of the stylistically unifying elements which work with its disjointed form. The state of mind in which Grimes feels in contact with the suffering of the dead, his daughter, father, Libertas and others not only joins them together but also does so out of time, since one sufferer is the ocelot which up till then he has not heard of. Again, medical terminology is used:

> I began to suspect that the disturbance had other origins. I had an idea that a normally inactive group of cerebral nerve cells was being activated and that my psychic balance . . . had suffered some damage. [3]

The insight he induces for his imaginary conversation with Ste. Thérèse invokes the idea of challenging both space and time in a creative leap:

> I was setting myself, largely subconsciously, on a backward course in time of around sixty years and a short spatial excursion of hardly more than a hundred kilometres.

1 Memorial, p. 61.
2 A Hole in the Head, p. 43. See also p. 83, 111. Doris Lessing's imaginative exploration of man's condition in her science-fiction Canopus in Argos: Archives (London, 1979-) sequence of novels is interesting in this connection. In The Making of the Representative for Planet 8 (London, 1982), for example, she evokes 'a universe that is all gradations of matter, from gross to fine to finer, so that we end up with everything we are composed of in a lattice, a grid, a mesh, a mist, where particles so small we cannot observe them are held in a strict and accurate web'.
3 The High Consistory p. 41.

'Most experiments in physics turn on the amount of shadow cast by the experimenter onto the object of his search' (Max Born).
Not only in physics, also in metaphysics. 1

This suggestion that there is a connection between physics and unusual psychic states is extended by Robert Banim's comment twenty-one years later when Grimes is going to visit the portrait:

- When you see it again after all the years it'll be the completion of an orbit, or spiral, through which our psyches move, as does the planet, though in neither case are we usually conscious of it.
Even without Banim's esoteric remark, I saw our next stop as more than a coincidence. Leaving aside possible parallels between psychic and cosmic laws, phases of the moon and signs of the zodiac, I might be moving into a period of existence where events were not subject to foreseeable probability. 2

In the novel, two possibilities of science are described. The one is complete destruction, as in the talk given by a survivor of Hiroshima. The other, however, is the possibility of discovering worlds hitherto only suspected, symbolised by Walewska's talk on the possibility of there being a tenth planet, and the project inaugrated by the Royal Astronomical Society, of which Mr. Reilly is part, to renew the search for that planet. Here, then, there is the possibility of annihilation or new life, both potentials contained in the same sorts of investigation and the language of the investigation itself used to express alternative states of mind. These are the same states which in his earlier work Stuart expressed by using mystical language or allusion to the mystics: in Women and God, for example, suffering and death and new, transcendent life are encapsulated in the description of the crucified Christ's head taken from Revelations of Divine Love. What

1 The High Consistory, p. 101. See also Black List, Section H, p. 135 where H describes Juliana of Norwich's mystical relationship with Christ as 'time's flow being reversed by new sensibilities of love'.
2 The High Consistory, p. 151.

is interesting here is that Stuart recognises both the similar potentials of mysticism and pure science, and, more importantly, the shared quality of their modes of expression. Although the references to science are designed to ballast the ethereal spiritualisation of the narrative and its settings, by stating them in the concrete terms of reference of science, in fact, the languages of pure science and mysticism appear to be similar. The description of 'psychic balance' is the changed state of view sought by risk-taking and defeat elsewhere;[1] the transcendence of space and time is basic to mystical thought, as is the clarity of vision sought by the physicist; while the idea that the psyche moves as does the planet is another way of expressing the cosmic unity of mysticism.[2]

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1 See also The High Consistory, p. 274, for the identification with the outcast motif: 'au fond the time-space continuum about which we might be going to hear from the Cracow academic was not another term for chaos but was, after all, a scene where the non-publicised sometimes come into their own'.

2 Added interest is given to these correspondences by the description of current research into nuclear physics given by Fritjof Capra. In his discussion of the relationship between mystical thought and fundamental theories of modern physics, in The Tao of Physics, (London, 1975) he comments on the unity of all things: 'Quantum theory has abolished the notion of fundamentally separated objects, has introduced the concept of the participator to replace that of the observer, and may even find it necessary to include the human consciousness in its description of the world' (p. 147). On the idea of space and time being transcended, he says: 'The space-time of relativistic physics is a . . . timeless space of a higher dimension. All events in it are interconnected, but the connections are not causal . . . there is no 'before' and no 'after' and thus no causation'. (p. 196) These statements lead to the idea that everything is part of an organic whole. In mystical terms, 'the most important thing about parts is that they have to fit precisely into place with the other parts in the whole organism which they compose'(p. 306) while in terms of modern physics: ' everything in the universe is connected to everything else and no part of it is fundamental. The properties of any part are determined, not by some fundamental law, but by the properties of all the other parts. Both physicists and mystics realise the resulting impossibility of fully explaining any phenomenon'.(p. 307) See also Gary Zukav, The Dancing Wu Li Masters (London, 1979) for a further discussion of some of these aspects of the new physics.

Only extracts from one of Stuart's plays, Who Fears to Speak?,[1] have been published. Other plays have been presented on stage, however: Men Crowd Me Round at the Abbey Theatre, March 1933 and Strange Guest[2] in December, 1940; and Flynn's Last Dive at the Pembroke Theatre, Croydon,[3] in March, 1962. The interest of the published part of Who Fears to Speak? lies in its relationship to the mainstream of Stuart's work: his use of the ark motif in a series of metamorphosed forms, the conflict between spiritual and material values, and the theme of the idealist worsted by 'the greedy, cautious men'[4] are significant from this point of view. An awareness of the material helps, also, in a consideration of the dramatic qualities in his novels, his use of direct address in a variety of voices, of dramatic tension and of dialogue. What is significant here is that which is not stated: the lack of comment by Halka and Dominic when they see the falling star after the death of Lisette, for example, points up its dramatic significance. When this is compared with the authorial comments on the death of Dominic in The White Hare, for example, that handling of the situation seems so obvious as to be almost crude. It is the action of letting an event or statement stand for itself, without comment, that is a major contribution to the developing interiorisation of Stuart's style made by his experiments with drama. As well as that, one might point to the juxtaposition of certain incidents or statements so that one is an ironic comment on the other. In Black List, Section H, for example, H

1 Francis Stuart, 'from Who Fears to Speak?': Who Fears to Speak? was a commemoration commissioned in 1970 for production at the Peacock Theatre for the fiftieth anniversary of Terence MacSwiney's death while on hunger strike in Brixton Prison. It was not performed there, however, although later that year it was given a reading in Liberty Hall.

2 Both plays are mentioned in Joseph Holloway's Irish Theatre, edited by R. Hogan and M. J. O'(Neill, 3 vols (California, 1968-70), II, 24; III, 52-3.

3 Francis Stuart, p. 87.

4 Who Fears to Speak?, p. 9.

confides to one of the Parisian prostitutes some of his painful imaginings about despair, and death attended by a thirst which is both physical and spiritual:

> Another initiate into the hell of thirst: the wild animal caught in the trap, waiting in agony for dusk to fall and perhaps catch a drop of dew on its tongue. What did he know of those raging fires of delirium tremens and of the other deliriums? And of the terible ache in the innermost part of the brain as the sap in the cells and neurons is polluted and poisoned?
> . . .he though[t] he managed to tell Danielle one evening some of what was on his mind . . . she lifted her long still childlike face that was serious and devoid of make-up and said: "C'est ne faire rien, chéri, there are plenty like you, born that way. Maybe you'll get out of it, some do; if not, you're sure to make some nice friends of your own sort." 1

In spite of their unceasing contact over several days, Danielle has learned nothing of H; only, because the contact has been non-sexual, she assumes that he must be homosexual and that all of his concerns are about that. Of course, this juxtaposing for comment is the major formal technique of The High Consistory; there, too, there is a sense of variety of voices. These include the dialogue between Simeon Grimes and a woman journalist in an interview and that between Julio Bailey and the girls on their Holy Island trip; the voice of Grimes as a child; and the final, reflective voice as he works in his attic room. There, too, the performance of The Tempest suggests that drama may have some of the time-spanning qualities of the painter, that just as the painter can suggest 'that certain experiences coincide outside time' so the re-enactment of a play performed elsewhere can have a relevance which links together the purpose of its original writing and its present production, since 'great works of art reflect the preoccupation of later generations, and even of particular times and places'.[2]

The use of dramatic technique appears in 'The Stormy Petrel' in the

1 Black List, Section H, p. 180.
2 The High Consistory, p. 302.

form of a narrative style which is both a soliloquy and an address to the audience, the intimacy of the narrative gaining dramatic effectiveness from the confessional quality which its public appearance gives it. There is, too, and underlying but discernible sense of Stuart's earlier training as a poet, which disciplines and enriches the prose writing, discernable in the lightness but tautness of its allusion and the density of the imagery, which culminates in an expression of inner understanding which is both passionate and lyrical:

> O, my secret albatross, my marine black-bird with the speck of white (that I first took to be foam) on the rump, and disproportionately long wings, teach me how not to wait!
> For news, for the morning post, for an answer; I must learn to fly just aloft of the storm, but not out of it, to float and ride the wet-ash swells as dawn breaks, head tucked under one wing. 1

There is, too, a directness of address, elsewhere, that is similar to that used to express the thoughts and responses of Stuart's later heroes, and to comment ironically on them:

> Did I know the right choice for me (this is not a tale about anyone else)? Yes. Was I going to make it? Let's put it like this; was I going to swallow the lollipop, wrapping and all, if I got the chance, before the Committee Chairman had time to let go the ribbon? Yes! 2

These extracts, too, are typical of the ironic tone of Stuart's later work. In novels such as The Coloured Dome or Glory, insight is gained through experiences that are essentially ecstatic and although their result is usually a revaluing of the mundane, this is communicated in a language which has much of the highly symbolic quality of the original experience. Tulloolagh, for example, is 'A dark seraph fallen out of the nightmares of Purgatory to the earth, instead of to the

1 'The Stormy Petrel', p. 21.
2 'The Stormy Petrel', p. 20.

heaven that she had expected',[1] after she has been freed instead of being executed; Garry Delea realises that 'In a few hours lyrical exultation and passion and pity had made fertile his heart . . . Autumn had ended for him last night with the harvest ungarnered'.[2] When Mairead is tried in Glory, she thinks of herself as 'a hurricane, a tidal wave, breaking through a street of huge company offices, magnificent brothels and the palaces of wordly bishops. Not breaking as a storm, with malice, but because it was passing and had to make a way to the far mountains'.[3] An exaggeration of that tone is used ironically in In Search of Love, to suggest the futility of Coral Century's search, and for humourous effect, as in the description of her making love on the front plate of an express train:

> She cared for nothing, nothing, only this. This madness, this wild sweetness. A faint glow appeared in front of them, brightened, grew into individual points of light. A town of some sort was rushing to meet them. They, like a comet with a fiery tail, sped towards it. Lights flashed by on each side of the two half oblivious lovers. They saw each other's faces for a moment as they rushed through a station. [4]

In the novels following In Search of Love there is a greater refinement of tone. In place of the revelatory, ecstatic, but essentially exterior imagery is put a more suggestive, less explicit mood. In The White Hare, for example, although Dominic's revelation is still essentially exterior, Hylla's is suggested more by setting and object - the woods, in the Wilderness at Rosaril, the hare's collar bone she finds there - so that the final image of her, though beautiful, is almost redundant:

> One day in the Wilderness when she was picking wood-sorrel she found part of the skeleton of a hare. She held the smooth white collar-

1 The Coloured Dome, p. 277.
2 The Coloured Dome, p. 286.
3 Glory, p. 284.
4 In Search of Love, p. 174.

bone in her hand for a moment before letting it fall back again on to the damp leaf-mould.

Her pale, thin face had now more than ever the stark beauty of a thing that has been stripped of all inessentials and is left bare. Her grey eyes appeared to grow a shade darker as though the wild light that had shone in them that day when she had leaped along the Barra cliffs, and one other time, had receded farther into her like a lamp that is carried into an adjoining room. 1

In the post-war novels there is a greater degree of sympathy between character and setting that makes such obviousness unnecessary. Halka, in The Pillar of Cloud, becomes a part of the back ground of suffering and love when Dominic sees her in the graveyard - not a symbol of it, but a section of its whole:

And there was Halka close to him, her breasts bare before him, the skin pale and almost luminous, not contradicting the tombstones, but completing them, both part of the one strange world, emblems of that called love and that called death. 2

The greater refinement of tone is clear here, in this sombre but dramatic linking of person and setting. This in turn is linked to a sense of universal values and a perpetual, cosmic struggle between good and evil, of which the characters in the novel - Halka and her torturer, Radek - are a part:

And there seem to have been many men like this Radek, and I dare say there always have and always will be . . . And that is the really astounding thought: the concrete presence of so much evil always on the earth, either constrained and partly frustrated, or active. And the only thought that is capable of balancing it, so to speak, is the belief that at the same time there is another force at work on earth, another potency, equally concrete and living. I mean that side by side with your Radeks there are those whose hearts are full of such innocence that if you have been given a glimpse into one of them then your astonishment is greater than the astonishment at the Radeks. 3

1 The White Hare, p. 313-4.
2 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 215.
3 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 218.

The tone here is at once more profound and less ecstatic than that of the post-war novels: there is a sense of wonder which gains its conviction from the firm acceptance, as a matter of fact, of the spiritual values which are discussed. Instead of using a single moment of brilliant, illuminating awareness - or a series of such moments - as the means for investigating character, through complex imagery, there is a more measured, rational acceptance of the continuation of such insight. Because illumination exists outside the immediate visionary moment, therefore, it can be examined at greater length, more subtly, and more complexly too since its complexity now stems from its existence in a variety of contexts rather than just one context: Dominic and Halka's illumination informs their every action, where, for instance, Garry Delea's came only when he was sentenced to death.

The move here is from revelation coming from outside to it being found within. The outside world becomes a catalyst for the hero's insight, something propagating a search which is already conscious, whereas in the pre-war novels, revelation tends to be imposed on heroes who are often reluctant to grasp it. Colin, in Women and God, finds profound despair and self-accusation in his redemptive experience; Frank Allen, in Pigeon Irish, is first of all reluctant to follow Catherine's guidance; for Garry Delea, in The Coloured Dome, his revelation is a complete surprise, and Mairead, in Glory, finds in it an ecstasy greater than that which she had expected. Dominic in The Pillar of Cloud and Ezra in Redemption, though, are struggling consciously towards some sort of self-knowledge, and deliberately putting themselves in situations where they might find it. This, too, is the case of H in Black List, Section H, and the sole reason for his racing, drinking, and sojourns in London, Paris and Berlin. The problem is, however, to match the intensity of the search with an intensity of setting. Those novels that deal with a realistic wartime setting have least difficulty in this

since it is possible for person and place to melt into each other in a single expression of suffering, destruction, and the potential for renewal. Elsewhere, however, the solution is more difficult since an equal seriousness of tone, against a different setting, would be likely to be melodramatic or, at least, contrived. Instead, Stuart develops an increasingly ironic tone, undercutting the serious demands of his hero for insight with the hero's relationship with the ordinary world. In Good Friday's Daughter, for example, Mark's search for love, which ends in his and Danielle's suicide, begins with intercourse with Dukey in a bath-tub, whose thoughts are expressed as a stream of consciousness:

> Here we go, sailing, sailing swiftly under the Brig o'Doon, or Butt Bridge, where a couple of dogs were hard at it in the gutter that evening, with my brave young hero at the helm, ready to haul down the funnel in the nick of time; it's all fire and smut, wriggle and piggery, the dirtiest, dearest . . . The watery brawl with the tide coming in and the life sucked out of me with the kiss of his, lick of his, love of his sweet hot mug of his . . . [1]

Dukey's expressive but essentially earthly thoughts are an ironic comment on Mark's search for a love that will satisfy both his sexual and his spiritual needs. Amos is diminished similarly in The Chariot when Viola Glendinning invites him and Lena to live at her house for a while since she is a great admirer of his work; in fact, she has confused him with another A. L. Selby, the author of The Nature and Habitat of Bees.[2] The effect in both cases is of a comic reduction of the hero which puts a distance between him and his setting and thus suggests that, if his is not a superior vision it is at least a different one from the social norm and cannot, therefore, be judged by conventional standards. In Black List, Section H, and the novels written since this method is elaborated into an understated humour which

1 Good Friday's Daughter, p. 60-1.
2 The Chariot, p. 163.

contrasts with the seriousness of their hero's intentions and suggests that he is moving in a material world which is so far removed from his understanding as to be absurd. When H smuggles guns into Ireland, for instance, he also smuggles in contraceptives and it is the latter item which excites him most. So, he leaves the arms in a left luggage office while he goes to 'one of the shops whose windows were full of unbearably lovely looking syringes with long, flexible nozzles, douches with lengths of rubber tubing, as well as books by de Sade, Paul de Cock and Boccaccio with provocative pictures on their covers'[1] and when H has boarded safely 'he unbuckled his belt and laid the guns on the berth. He then took out the envelope and examined one of the pale, rolled, rubber rings webbed over with a semitransparent membrane'.[2] One indication of the impossibility of any real sexual or spiritually unity between H and Iseult is narrated in a mock-medieval style, to heighten its absurdity. H and Iseult, having walked part of the way to Lourdes, stop at an inn to rest for the evening and the gap between the interests of H, 'the servitor' and Iseult, 'the servant of God', becomes clear:

> the female servant of God, having undone the thongs of her sandals and the servitor, somewhat inconvenienced by his pilgrim's staff, which he didn't care to relinquish, gave themselves over to contemplation of the unincarnate Platonic Light.
>
> The servitor, however, not far advanced in the Purgative Way, and finding the achievement of inner quietude beyond him, hobbled over to the servant of God's corner and, under the spell of the Old Adam, suggested that the time might be passed in more amorous exercises.
>
> Repulsing his advances with distaste, she exhorted him to use the hour or two that remained before the meal was ready in advancing the virtue of patience.

After supper:

1 Black List, Section H, p. 78. The spelling of 'de Kock' is a deliberate pun designed to emphasise the obsessional nature of H.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 79.

> The servitor, first stripped, waited until the servant of God had slipped on the loose kirtel in which she slept, standing with bruised feet and pilgrim's staff, from which he never parted, midway between the two cots.
>
> The servant of God, after rising from her knees, said, 'Come, in the name of St. Sebastian and all the holy martyrs,' and stretched herself crosswise on the pallet. 1

The lack of shared feeling is tragic, as well. The language of convential devotion underlines the fact that H's spiritual life is an unconventional one, that it is sought through the agency of his 'pilgrim's staff', and through a sexual contact that is self-transcending. At the same time, the main effect is comic, suggesting the gaucherie of H and the impossibility of him finding any true experience in the conventionally ordered world. This lack of understanding of the simple functioning of normal life is felt by Simeon Grimes, too: he cannot operate the appliances in the Breffny's bathroom, neither to flush the lavatory nor to turn the taps on;[2] later, he is unable to stop an air-conditioning machine blasting cold air through his hotel bedroom;[3] and in an unfamiliar kitchen, cannot find his breakfast although when his hostess arrives,

> While she was talking she had taken the utensil that, in her hand, suddenly became a coffee pot into which the last of the coffee had just percolated from the paper cone, from the hot-plate, poured me a steaming cupful, lifted a plate covering a pan on the stove, which I'd also mistaken as used utensils from her own breakfast, revealing fried strips of bacon and toasted crumpets. 4

The inimical relations between Grimes and machines is almost a clown-like humour, a ridiculousness which is propagated only to show the clown's eventual victory, in circus terms, or the superiority of his

1 Black List, Section H, p. 161.
2 The High Consistory, p. 15.
3 The High Consistory, p. 147.
4 The High Consistory, p. 31-2.

vision, in the terms of the novel. Elsewhere, the humour is much grimmer; Sugrue's description of himself as an 'old, sacked, no-longer-funny clown, taken to debauchery, with his eye on the circus proprietress's little, ringleted daughter'[1], indicates the potential bitterness of this style of self-probing and the pain which is a necessary part of the hero's inability to understand the world. The triumph of the heroes, however, lies in the affirmation they eventually receive that their vision is correct, that the world with which they have problems is forced out of their immediate concern, and their own world reinstated. At the end of Memorial, Liz cancels an appointment Sugrue has to talk to the Friends of Peace by telling them 'he's got involved with another group, the Friends of Sex'[2]; Shane's delusion that he is accompanied by Emily Brontë, which makes him insist that friends set her a place at dinner and provide a theatre seat for her, is vindicated by the old lady at the end of A Hole in the Head. Humour is an indication of the gaucherie and folly of his heroes but it also validates their wisdom, the essential rightness of their vision. Moreover, because humour is the medium for this, it does so with a sense of self-knowledge, and a generous acceptance of the need for foolishness before wisdom is found.

The change in tone points up a change in characterisation. Again, this might be described as a move from exterior to interior, from a largely symbolic hero and heroine to realistic ones. Curiously, this sense of realism of character existed in Women and God - as its reviewer in the Times Literary Supplement said, the novel 'has a feeling for character'[3] - but seems to have been lost in the highly allegorical tone

1 Memorial, p. 139-40. See also p. 147, where Sugrue describes himself as 'the crazed old tramp'.
2 Memorial, p. 261.
3 Anonymous review, Times Literary Supplement, 1 October 1931, p. 755.

of the novels which followed it. Catherine, in Pigeon Irish, and Tulloolagh in The Coloured Dome, for example, are realised less as characters and more as abstractions of qualities. The greater chastity of style of The White Hare, however, produces characters which are essentially more realistic and in which there is less of the ambiguity of identity found in the narrator of Things To Live For, or Sonia in The Angel of Pity. The reduction in ambiguity produces a greater range of characterisation. Instead of various qualities being crammed into one person, to an extent which removes their identity as a person, complexity is communicated by increasing the variety of characterisation. In The Pillar of Cloud, therefore, sacred and sensual are first divided and then conjoined by using two sisters to represent them. Halka is conceived of as an angel by Lisette: but her suffering is physical, at first, her torture in prison and the mental hospital resulting in her spiritual despair. Lisette is a child of the streets, cunning and wary, but her distress is essentially spiritual, caused by her desire but inability to comprehend the vision of peace which Dominic left in Ireland, epitomised by the lake on which he used to fish.[1] Dominic's marriage to Lisette, his love for Halka, and the death of Lisette, which 'was like the dropping of a seed into the very bottom of their consciousness'[2] unites the two sisters and intermingles their qualities, giving each a realism and a complexity which would have been impossible had they stood alone. In Black List, Section H, of course, the character of H gains this complexity through the series of personae that are used for him, Harry, Luke, Stephen, X and 'other names, biblical ones'[3] which are not given. The women in that novel, too, gain a great depth of characterisation because they are always conceived of

1 see The Pillar of Cloud, p. 197.
2 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 228.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 377.

in terms of H and his relationships to them: as he progresses in maturity, therefore, so he seeks more and different sympathies in women, who are defined by the inadequacies of their predecessors as well as by their own qualities. It should be added that this definition of everything in relation to H is applied to all characters in the novel, not women alone. H rejects the experiences of his acquaintances in favour of his own course of action. For example, 'Hilliard had been killed on the Ebro, and H honoured and admired him, but that wasn't where H should have been killed . . . the Ebro wasn't his destiny'[1] and he rejects the responsibility Stroud tries to impose on him 'to your fellows who are being persecuted and having their books burnt' in favour of his own intentions, the 'defense of the indefensible and in questioning the unquestionable'.[2] Characteristic of the novel is its realistic style, achieved through the combination of narrative and interior questioning which puts H and his perceptions at its centre. The effect of this is not so much to diminish events as to translate them into personal terms and thus, perhaps, to give them a truer perspective. The news of the dropping of the A bomb is typical of this:

> she told him she'd heard on the Altdorf's radio that an atomic bomb had been dropped on Japan. As they walked in the thin patches of shade cast by the dark canopies on top of the row of smooth pillarlike tree trunks at the edge of the shimmering water, H recognized by its impact on deep-centred nerves that would take time to assimulate it that this was one of those rare pieces of news - that of the Russian Revolution had been another - that was going to have some profound consequences that he could only indistinctly foresee. 3

This passage, too, is a good example of the interiorisation characteristic of Stuart's later work: the significance of the bomb is too great for H to absorb and so the intense impact the news makes on

1 Black List, Section H, p. 258.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 262.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 396.

him is expressed by the sharp, detailed description of trees and lake.

The practice of making the hero the gateway through which the action of the novel is perceived is used in all three novels which follow Black List, Section H. Since Sugrue, Shane and Grimes are subject to increasing self-questioning, and progressively more alteration in their perspectives, the effect is to produce a greater variety. Sugrue's response to Herra is first of all 'What a little show-off!'[1]; then he absorbs her into his fantasies about 'Esquimo Belles'[2]; briefly she represents 'the beatitude of youth'[3] before taking on the first part of the complex Magdalen-Christ-hare identity which is developed throughout the rest of the novel and initiated by the phrase describing Herra grieving over the now-empty hutch: 'Mary had stood staring at the open tomb'.[4] It is this complexity of perception, this willingness to change and restate reactions, which allows Shane to link Emily with Ruth and Claudia, and which produces Grimes's complex expression of the character of Claire and the nature of the Sisterhood to which she belongs. The process is one of refining and accreting, refining an expression of character into some irreducible minimum and then adding one expression to another, layering them so that the final result is a series of identities, each true but each modifying the understanding of the other

* * * * * * *

Although Stuart's work has been considered independently of that of other writers, he was not, of course, working in a total vacuum. The nature of his aesthetic means that his work is characterised by a tendency to separate itself from any consensus, since it seeks to find truth through isolation from generally accepted values. In Black List,

1 Memorial, p. 8.
2 Memorial, p. 10.
3 Memorial, p. 13.
4 Memorial, p. 16.

Section H, for example, H seeks to leave the 'unreal, Yeatsian world'[1] and the world of literary Dublin, described to him by Joseph Campbell, which he feels is only a 'mysterious contest' and 'nothing to do with exploring the lonely and dangerous paths'.[2] The little that is known about Stuart's life, too, suggests a similar desire for isolation, while his milieu can only be guessed at, through such indications as that his first novel was dedicated to Thomas McGreevy. Nevertheless, that his individual talent was shaped to some degree by his reading of other writers is shown by references to them in his own novels. H, for example, reads about the lives of Keats, Dostoyevsky and van Gogh:

> with feverish intensity and a kind of impatience as though looking for a particular message. And in several cases he came on what he'd subsconciously expected, experiencing an almost unbearable excitement, and believing himself on the verge of a vital revelation that he was not yet quite ripe for. 3

Some degree of comparison with other writers is necessary, although inevitably limited, therefore, in fairness to Stuart's own work, to give a sense of its range of uniqueness. Parallels drawn by critics between Stuart's novels and those of Dostoyevsky and Lawrence have been noted. New Statesman's review of The Coloured Dome, for example, commented that 'Mr. Stuart writes here under the influence of Dostoevsky'[4] while Compton MacKenzie's foreword to Try the Sky compared that novel favourably with Lawrence's work.[5] Early reviewers also pointed to the influence of Hemingway of Stuart's style: the TLS review of Pigeon Irish commented that 'The Publishers draw our attention, on the wrapper, to the resemblance between the staccato style and that of Mr.

1 Black List, Section H, p. 16.
2 Black List, Section H, p. 105.
3 Black List, Section H, p. 130-1.
4 'New Novels', New Statesman and Nation, New Series, 4, no. 75 (July 1932), 133-4 (134).
5 Compton Mackenzie, 'Foreword', Try the Sky.

Hemingway'[1], although elsewhere another reviewer comments that 'mellifluous prose is the eminent quality in the first two books by Francis Stuart'.[2] These correspondences have been taken up, but not examined exhaustively, by more recent commentators - Natterstad, for instance, says of The Pillar of Cloud that 'there are distinct traces of the poetic prose of D. H. Lawrence and the moral tension of Dostoevsky's novels'.[3] Stuart also makes reference to a wide range of other writers. Frequently, the interest seems to stem from the unusual vision of these writers. Part of Blake's William Bond is quoted in The Pillar of Cloud to emphasise and counterpoint Stuart's own concern with compassion, suffering, and the outcast;[4] in Memorial, Sugrue quotes from Kafka's Reflections on Sin, Suffering, Hope and the True Way[5] for a similar purpose. It is this sense of finding elsewhere a reflection of his own concerns that leads H to read Rozanov's Solitaria because:

> H found that Rozanov had always dissociated himself from the attitudes of his time that "everybody of importance," his fellow writers in particular, shared . . . Rozanov had an instinct, only partly conscious, the demonic spirit being half asleep in him, that only a response to new situations and events which was unforgiveable by his associates would have any final relevance. 6

This treatment of similar concerns is part of the interest which Thomas Mann's work clearly has for Stuart. In Black List, Section H he quotes from Death in Venice, '"Knowledge is all-knowing, understanding, forgiving; it takes up no position, sets no store by form. It has

1 Anonymous review of Francis Stuart, Pigeon Irish, Times Literary Supplement, 11 February 1932, p. 92.
2 Anonymous review, America: A Catholic Review of the Week. 28 January, 1933, p.416
3 Francis Stuart, p. 68.
4 The Pillar of Cloud, p. 168. The first three stanzas appear as a preface to Angels of Providence.
5 Memorial, p. 200. See also Black List, Section H, p. 310.
6 Black List, Section H, p. 250-1.

compassion with the abyss - it *is* the abyss"',[1] and in *The High Consistory* from *Doctor Faustus*:

> Thomas Mann, in *Doctor Faustus*, puts it thus: 'The secret delight . . . of hell '(or the secret pain of heaven, I will dare add on my own)' is that it is not to be informed on, that it is protected from speech, language hath nought to do and no connection with it'. [2]

Both quotations reflect Stuart's own preoccupations with indivisibility of the most vital experiences and the impossibility of expressing them in any simple terms. He quotes Mann's idea of the abyss to support H's own journey into disrepute and a kind of criminality, while the authorial interpolation in the quotation from *Doctor Faustus* indicates clearly that Stuart's interest is a highly personal one. How deep his interest is in Mann is a matter for speculation. It is interesting to note certain points of similarity between *Doktor Faustus* and Stuart's later work; for example, *Doktor Faustus* is presented as a report, rather than a novel and its narrator, like H, says 'Dennoch gibt es etwas, was einige von uns in Augenblicken, die ihnen selbst als verbrecherisch erscheinen, andere aber frank und permanent, mehr fürchten als die deutsche Niederlage, und das ist der deutsche Sieg'.[3] It is interesting to note, too, that in the debate about the nature of the artist, Mann refers to 'Richard Wagner, who at the time of *Parsifal* added to his name

1 *Black List*, *Section H*, p. 363.
2 *The High Consistory*, p. 127.
3 Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus* (Frankfurt, 1967; first published 1947), p. 45; Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter (London, 1951), p. 30, renders this as: 'And yet there is something else - some of us fear it at moments which seems to us criminal, but others quite frankly and steadily - something we fear more than German defeat, and that is German victory'.

signed to a letter the title "Member of the High Consistory"'[1] and asks:

> wie ernst es dem Künstler mit dem ist, was ihm das Angelegentlich-Ernsteste sein sollte und zu sein scheint; wie ernst er sich selbst dabei nimmt und wieviel Verspieltheit, Mummschanz, höherer Jux dabei im Spiele ist. [2]

Mann's enquiry into the nature of the artist, and especially the evocative phrase 'The High Consistory', suggests Stuart's most recent novel with its mixture of grim humour and serious analysis of the nature of artistic inspiration. The final correspondence between the work of Stuart and Mann, though, is the one which argues most convincingly for a conscious awareness of Doctor Faustus by Stuart: the deaths of Mann's ideal child, Echo, and that of Stuart's girl-child, from spinal meningitis. The deaths are painful and tragic for both writers, and bring a sense of loss and guilt to their narrators. Echo is the more highly developed character but all the children are symbolic of a helpless innocence, destroyed by an unrelenting conquerable force. The idea is expressed in Memorial, that:

> I've heard since that the imagination sometimes shapes life as well as art, and that Kafka in 'Der Prozess' had for theme the process of disease and called down on himself the tuberculosis that killed him,

1 Lowe-Porter, p. 373; Doktor Faustus, p. 495: 'Richard Wagners, der Zeit des 'Parsifal' seinem Namen unter einem Brief den Titel "Oberkirchenrat" hinzufügte'. See Nietzsche, Ecce Homo, p. 364: 'Durch ein Wunder von Sinn im Zufall kam gleichzeitig bei mir ein schönes Exemplar des Parsifal-Textes an, mit Wagners Widmung an mich 'seinem teuren Freunde Friedrich Nietzsche, Richard Wagner, Kirchenrat'. (translated by R. J. Hollingdale in the Penguin edition of Ecce Homo, London, 1979 as 'Through a miracle of meaningful chance I received at the same time a beautiful copy of the Parsifal text, with Wagner's dedication to me, 'his dear friend Friedrich Nietzsche, Richard Wagner, Ecclesiastical Counsellor'. If an association is intended by Stuart, clearly it can be made best through the Lowe-Porter translation of Mann.

2 Doktor Faustus, p. 495; Lowe-Porter, p. 373: 'how serious is the artist in what ought to be, and seems, his most pressing and earnest concern; how seriously does he take himself in it, and how much tired disillusionment, affectation, flippant sense of the ridiculous is at work?'

and that Mahler with his 'Kindertotenlieder' caused the death of his own child. 1

This is suggestive of Adrian Leverkuhn's self-accusation, that he was the cause of Echo's death because 'ich meine Augen an ihm weidete! Du mußt wissen, Kinder sind aus zartem Stoff, sie sind gar leicht für giftige Einflüsse empfänglich'. 2 For both writers, therefore, the failure of their hero is a failure of his imagination, the creative source which should maintain life; its failure leads to an isolation, the isolation of H in prison and the alienating madness of Leverkuhn, and as H's situation held out a promise of reintegration, so Leverkuhn, and Germany, must reach 'the bottom of the abyss' before a new existence is possible:

> Wann wird es des Schlundes Grund erreichen? Wann wird aus letzer Hoffnungslosigkeit, ein Wunder, das über den Glauben geht, das Licht der Hoffnung tagen? Ein einsamer Mann faltet seine Hände und spricht: Gott sei euerer armen Seele gnädig, mein Freund, mein Vaterland. 3

As this shows, Mann and Stuart place different relative importance on the role played by hero and setting: for Mann, Leverkuhn's 'abyss' is a reflection of that of Germany; finally, 'my Fatherland' is more important than 'my friend'. H's setting, however, is important only insofar as it illuminates some part of his character or furthers his intentions. Stuart's concentration is on the development of his hero, and isolation, alienation, and despair are personal experiences, not allegorical ones.

1 Memorial, p. 159.
2 Doktor Faustus, p. 633; Doctor Faustus, p. 478: 'I feasted my eyes on him! You must know that children are tender stuff, they are receptive for poisonous influences'.
3 Doktor Faustus, p. 676; Doctor Faustus, p. 510: When will she reach the bottom of the abyss? When, out of uttermost hopelessness - a miracle beyond the power of belief - will the light of hope dawn? A lonely man folds his hands and speaks: 'God be merciful to thy poor soul, my friend, my Fatherland!'.

Comparisons for this may be found in the work of Samuel Beckett. For Sugrue, Shane and Grimes, 'the real quest happens ultimately inside the author's own skull',[1] as A. Alvarez comments about Molloy. The quality of the alienation felt by Stuart's and Beckett's characters is quite different, of course, Beckett's narrators tell stories - their own or other people's - contemptuously, in order to stave off their depression, or pass the time until death silences them, or simply to show they can do so; eventually, each of them 'returns, however regretfully, to the insight that there are no final answers to be had from theology or metaphysics . . . The impotence his deprived, ruined characters sense so keenly and return to so consistently is spiritual as well as physical'.[2] For Stuart's characters, however, alienation brings an insight which is more than just the ability to endure for its own sake and which, as in the case of Grimes, is a specific for spiritual and physical impotence. They court 'the self-confrontations solitude brings',[3] therefore, while Beckett's narrators seek to avoid it. When the final words of The Unnamable, 'you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on',[4] are alluded to in The High Consistory, it is with a certain ironic humour: Grimes, unable to face another fast walk across New York "repeated to myself the words of a well-known personage in a possible similar situation: 'I can't go on; I'm going on'".[5] The quality of the experiences of their characters is different; but both are concerned with a journey into the self to find some kind of insight, and it might be argued that there are other points of contact in their work as well.

1 A. Alvarez, Samuel Beckett, Modern Masters (New York, 1973) p. 52.
2 Alvarez, p. 51-52. Beckett's characters also tell stories because, being artists of some kind, they are condemned to do so. An interesting discussion of this issue is given by Paul Lawley, The Paradox of Self-Annihilating Expression: Representations of Ontological Instability in the Drama of Samuel Beckett (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Warwick, 1978).
3 H. Kenner, A Reader's Guide to Samuel Beckett (London, 1973) p. 9.
4 Samuel Beckett, The Unnamable (London, 1959), p. 418.
5 The High Consistory, p. 163.

As Hugh Kenner says, 'Beckett will often use and reuse a story or a motif until we are apt to suppose that we are re-reading versions of the same work',[1] a device which is a basic part of Stuart's technique. The qualities in Beckett's work which Stuart himself admires are those which are most vital to his own novels: an art which is 'obsessive and uncompromising'; a 'real or outrageous comedy' and a style which 'evokes the desultory, inconsequent kind of conversation that is universal' and 'doubtless causes discomfort rather than cosy reassurance in the reader who needs to feel on familiar ground'.[2] Interestingly, however, these are qualities, which Stuart feels are less evident in Beckett's work since its popularisation after the production of Waiting for Godot. Instead of 'intensity, originality and a kind of deadly humour', Stuart finds Beckett's most recent novel, Company, 'tedious and repetitious, deliberately so'.[3] Exactly what this criticism means is debatable. On one level, of course, it is Stuart's deliberate questioning of accepted values in literature, and a reflection of his belief that true art lies in obscurity, outside the approval of the consensus. On another level, however, it is a genuine questioning about the result of exposing the self to extremities of experience of probing into the fundamental parts of man's nature. Stuart says of Beckett 'One can only surmise what he himself endured in forming this concept of meaningless cruelty and chaos' and wonders whether Company is written as it is because 'there is nothing else left after exposure to the shock of what may be (though even this is not certain) ultimate reality'.[4] Here, Stuart would seem to be regarding the novel as a triumph rather than a failure, as a discovery of the limits of man's endurance and vision which may, however, be only an apparent limitation, a declaration of 'ultimate

1 Hugh Kenner, p. 12.
2 'The Soft Centre of Irish Writing', p. 8-9.
3 Francis Stuart, 'What Went Wrong?', Hibernia, 3 July 1980, p. 21.
4 'What Went Wrong?'.

reality' which, now it has been stated, can be transcended.

Whether or not this is so, Stuart's admiration is reserved for the uncompromising integrity of Beckett's attempts to further his artistic vision, at whatever cost, thus, by implication, defining his own interests. It is the intrusion of these interests which make Stuart's criticism both so interesting and so difficult to read, since they almost always mean that his view is an idiosyncratic one which discounts accepted values. At the same time as it presents what is often an illuminating alternative view, therefore, it is also difficult to cope with since it lies outside the mainstreams of critical thought and thus to a great extent lacks the validating background from which other, more conventional critics, work. This highly individual view appears in his critical essay on Joyce, A Minority Report[1], and is implicit in its title. He takes issue with what he sees as the verdict of the consensus, that 'Ulysses[2] is the outstanding novel of this century and the most influential'. His principal objection is that 'He was totally blind . . . to everything outside the human race, and even to its more spiritual inclinations, to every facet of nature'[3] and he expands this in terms which are peculiarly his own:

> Joyce was blind to the passionate and compassionate intensities of love between men and women, to the psycho-physical area that can surround the genital sex beyond which he never ventures.
>
> This area of experience is close to man's rapport with nature itself, something equally closed to Joyce. [4]

Stuart argues his case for the lack of sensual and spiritual experience

1 Francis Stuart, 'A Minority Report', Irish University Review, 12, no. 1 (Spring 1982), p. 17-22. The 'extracts' from The High Consistory which appear in the article are, in fact, an elaborated version of material which appears on pp. 254-6 and 297-8 of the novel rather than verbatim extracts.
2 'A Minority Report' p. 18.
3 'A Minority Report' p. 19.
4 'A Minority Report' p. 19.

in Joyce convincingly, making claims for the presence of those qualities in other writers such as Dostoyevsky, Emily Brontë, Lawrence, Blake and Kavanagh. In so doing he is, of course, reiterating his own concerns, and it is of interest to the appreciation of the integrity of his vision that it should extend to his criticism. For the same reason it is significant that he describes Bloom as 'imaginatively impoverished'[1] while at the same time applauding the humour in Ulysses. To him, this is its strength, and 'Joyce is a comedian and parodist of the highest rank'.[2] It is meant as a criticism of other literature, therefore, not of Joyce, that 'Joyce's humour has not had much influence on fiction . . . little beyond his native shores where, of course, it echoes in Flann O'Brien, Behan, and occasionally, Samuel Beckett'.[1] Finally, in spite of what he sees as exaggerated acclaim for the novel, Stuart comments 'What a void there would be in one part of our consciousness had Ulysses never been written! And of how many novels can you say that?'[3] and his concern, as in the case of Beckett's Company, is for the quality of the experience which Joyce had to undergo to achieve his artistic insight:

> Joyce wrote very consciously, even calculatedly, knew exactly what he was doing and suffered under this agonising self-knowledge, self-vivisection almost, to an extent few artists have. One of his closest friends in his latter years, Georges Belmont, told me that at their last encounter shortly before Joyce left France for Switzerland, he had never seen a man so near despair.
>
> To comment on which would be impertinent, beyond reflecting on the price paid by such a person for utter fidelity to his art. [4]

1 'A Minority Report' p. 20.

2 'A Minority Report' p. 21. It is this comic spirit which is invoked by the passages in Good Friday's Daughter that seem to be a pastiche of Ulysses's stream of consciousness, with their imitation of sounds heard and report of things seen mingled with Dukey's thoughts, and the reference to 'a couple of dogs hard at it' (p. 61) which recalls Molly Bloom's memory of 'the two dogs up in her behind in the middle of the naked street' (James Joyce, Ulysses, New York: Random House 1934 edition, reset and corrected 1961, p. 778).

3 'A Minority Report', p. 21.

4 'A Minority Report', p. 22.

It would be easy to take issue with Stuart's case, perhaps to demolish it entirely, but this would be to refuse the insights he is offering. As far as Joyce is concerned, he is presenting an alternative view which is welcome in that it is rarely presented. More importantly, though, he is indicating the qualities which he values in literature and suggesting, by implication, the literary context in which his work should be viewed. This is not specifically Irish or Anglo-Irish, nor limited to the twentieth century. Rather, it encompasses work which deals with the imagination, with the inspirational quality of the sensual world, which presents alternative modes of thought, perhaps through an anarchic humour, and which is produced from the suffering which is a consequence of an artist's integrity of vision. Insofar as Beckett and Joyce have these qualities then Stuart's work may be compared to theirs; where it does not exist, they part company, each to follow their own aesthetics. Stuart's challenge to the conventional valuing of Beckett and Joyce is not so much because he feels they have been over-rated but because he believes that the wrong qualities in their work have been over-rated and that over-rating has led to a fossilisation of opinion about their literature which is the opposite to the dialogue with society and critic that a fiction writer must maintain in order to sustain his own creativity.

It is this lack of a maintained dialogue that he feels invalidates the reputation of much modern Irish writing, and which, he implies, places him outside its mainstream. In his challenging appraisal of contemporary Irish authors, The Soft Centre of Irish Writing, he elucidates that part of his aesthetic that deals with the relationship of a writer to the society he works in:

> The relation of the imaginative artist to his society is important for both. If the truly original artist is ignored or rejected he is driven into an isolation from which his best work may spring, and the society to which he belongs is the loser. A community that prefers its more

easily assimilated writers cuts itself off from one of the main sources of the vitality that preserves it from the constant encroachment of materialism and banality.

It is only those few writers capable of imagining alternative societies who can enter into a serious and mutually advantageous relationship with their own. [1]

Amongst those writers whose work had the imaginative power which allowed them to provide alternative ways of seeing and being, Stuart includes Yeats, Joyce, Flann O'Brien and Patrick Kavanagh, commenting that 'none of these with the possible exception of Yeats, made much impact on their society'.[2] Instead, he suggests,

> soon after the appearance of 'Ulysses' and a decade or so after our independence, there emerged a group of mainstream fiction writers, naturalistic, descriptive rather than probing, preoccupied with local colour and with an inherent conservatism. They were welcomed into the new political and social scene; they posed no awkward questions, imagined no alternatives, deferred gracefully to the world they and their writers had inherited. They were professional, witty, easy on tired or lazy minds, as in the case of censorship, far from being any fundamental confrontation, were in the nature of family quarrels, for they shared almost all the religious, national and social assumptions of the community. [3]

It is this undemanding sort of writing which Stuart typifies as 'soft-centred', giving Frank O'Connor's 'Guests of the Nation' and 'First Confession' as leading examples of it, and comparing them unfavourably with the 'obsessive and uncompromising art of Mr. Beckett'.[4] The article is a provocative one, raising more questions than it answers. Even if Stuart's judgement on Irish writing during the first decades of Irish independence is accepted, it might be questionable whether any real alternatives existed given the social pressures of the new state. Terence Brown, for example, suggests a variety of reasons for what he

1 'The Soft Centre of Irish Writing', p. 5.
2 'The Soft Centre of Irish Writing', p. 5.
3 'The Soft Centre of Irish Writing', p. 6.
4 'The Soft Centre of Irish Writing', p. 8.

calls 'the devastating lack of cultural and social innovation'[1] in the Free State government, some economic, some political, and some 'the inherited realities of the Irish social order'.[2] These factors would seem to militate against the possibilities of the society following any other literary course other than that outlined by Stuart. Whether or not that literature should still be valued is rather different question. Certainly, from Stuart's point of view, its respectability is its most damning quality; and his action of questioning it raises interesting lines of thought. Does the constant, trivial tinkering with 'Guests of the Nation', so that the 1963 revision of is noticeably different from the 1931 version, indicate that O'Connor himself felt some deficiency in the work, or is it a process justifiable simply as 'the elimination of certain colloquialisms, and the tightening of the style'.[3] If an attempt is to be made to classify the various literatures which are related to Ireland then might it be done best by reading the texts as social documents and dividing them into those which challenge their society and those which reinforce it, rather than into Irish, or Anglo-Irish? In that case, into which category would the work of Daniel Corkery, for example, fall - that which reinforces society because of its romantic idealisation of the Republican cause which led to independence, or that which challenges it, for the same reason? These speculations are not as profitless as they may appear, when they are applied to Stuart's own case. Although his post-war reputation may have been limited, his reputation in the 1930's was high: in a letter to Olivia Shakespear of 25 July, 1932 Yeats wrote:

Read The Coloured Dome by Francis Stuart. It is strange and exciting in

1 Terence Brown, p.17.
2 Terence Brown, p.14.
3 Grattan Freyer, A Prose and Verse Anthology of Modern Irish Writing, (Dublin, 1978), p. 27-28.

theme and perhaps more personally and beautifully written than any book of our generation; it makes you understand the strange Ireland that is rising up here . . . If luck comes to his aid he will be our great writer. [1]

Charlotte F. Shaw endorses this opinion in a letter to Yeats, commenting 'What a fine book "The Coloured Dome", [2] and on this evidence Stuart would seem to have belonged, at least tenuously, to some sort of consensus about Irish literature. There was equally strong dislike of some of his work, however, as a letter to Yeats from Thomas McGreevy, dated 16 May 1932, shows:

I hated Harry Stuart's novel, that Dorothy Macardle kind of Catholicism in it is so contemptible . . . He's writing very well I think but it is a monstrous crime for any Irishman to flatter Irish vanity at a time like this. Save Europe's soul indeed. [3]

T. B. Rudmose-Brown, Professor of French at Trinity College Dublin, 1909-42, raised objections to Stuart's being included in the Irish Academy of Letters, demanding of Yeats 'why is Francis Stuart a full Academician instead of Dunsany' [4] and, later, 'I could name many people who have done better work that Higgins or Stuart'. [5] Whether or not

1 The Letters of W. B. Yeats, p. 799-800.
2 Letters to W. B. Yeats, edited by R. J. Finneran, G. M. Harper and W. M. Murphy, 2 vols (London, 1977) II, p. 543.
3 Letters to W. B. Yeats, p. 538. Although the editors of the letter suggest that McGreevy is referring to Women and God it is most likely that Pigeon Irish is the novel concerned. The letter is dated 16 May 1932 and Pigeon Irish was reviewed by Times Literary Supplement on 11 February 1932; the novel puts forward a plan to set up small communities to 'carry on the old way of life, to keep our values, faith . . . holding the last outpost in Europe' (Pigeon Irish, p. 184); and it is unlikely perhaps that McGreevy would speak quite so harshly of a first novel by a young writer who had dedicated it to him. See Things To Live For, p. 227 where the narrator comments about his book, Pigeon Irish "That book had raised considerable controversy. One writer to an English daily had called it, 'A piece of unpardonable impertinence to suggest that Ireland could become the saviour of Europe'.
4 Letters to W. B. Yeats, p. 544.
5 Letters to W. B. Yeats, p. 546.

Stuart was part of a literary establishment in his early career is difficult to answer, since it is difficult to identify exactly what and who comprised such an establishment. The likely usefulness of such knowledge is difficult again, to assess. This is an area which has not yet been charted, and until it is examined authoritatively and thoroughly, speculation about Stuart's position in it is likely to produce rather barren results. What can be said is that contact with it was available: his membership of the Academy, the fact that his first novel was dedicated to Thomas McGreevy, his letters to Higgins, and his relationship to Yeats and other writers, as evidenced by Aengus and To-morrow, confirm that. How far that contact was exploited, however, is a different matter. Parallels for some features of Stuart's work may be sought in that of Liam O'Flaherty, for instance: the action of Women and God takes place over eight days, as does O'Flaherty's first novel, Thy Neighbour's Wife,[1] and both novels use days as chapter divisions; Shame the Devil[2] uses an autobiographical form as Things To Live For does and both novels use a narrative first-person persona who elevates and intensifies the narrative by his attitudes, although in O'Flaherty's case the effect is comic rather than mystical. One might ask, too, what similarities and differences exist between novels such as Pigeon Irish and The Coloured Dome and other fictional writing about the Republican struggle such as Daniel Corkery's short story collection The Hounds of Banba, the work of Sean O'Faolain, or David Martin's recent novel The Road to Ballyshannon.[3] Similarly, other contemporary writing about the conflict in the North of Ireland could provide an interesting comparison with Memorial and A Hole in the Head: Naomi May's Troubles,[4] Benedict

1 Liam O'Flaherty, Thy Neighbour's Wife (London, 1923).
2 Liam O'Flaherty, Shame the Devil (London, 1934).
3 David Martin, The Road to Ballyshannon (London, 1981).
4 Naomi May, Troubles (London, 1976).

Kiely's Proxopera[1], Jennifer Johnston's Shadows on our Skin[2], for instance. Finally, there are questions about relationships with other major Irish writers which could be illuminating for both specific works and general enquiry into the area but which the difficulty of making useful generalisations at present prohibits.

Such comparisons as those made are both necessary and limited. They are necessary because Stuart's work must be placed in a context of other contemporary writing but they are limited because the context itself is inadequately defined by scholarship. Finally, therefore, it is necessary to return to an initial valuation of Stuart's work by the qualities which are peculiar to it. In the case of a lesser writer this might produce a myopic view: the quality of Stuart's vision, that which perhaps should be called his 'redemptive imagination', is an expanding one, however. As W. J. McCormack said in 1972, 'history becomes contemporary and we must wait to see what Mr. Stuart will write next'.[3] Not only what Mr. Stuart will write, one might add, but also how he will write it, how he will express a vision which is constantly being re-defined; and how the increasing quantity of authoritative scholarship in contemporary Irish writing may be applied to that vision to understand not only Mr. Stuart's work but to revalue that of his contemporaries, in style and form as well as theme and content.

1 Benedict Kiely, Proxopera (London, 1977).
2 Jennifer Johnston, Shadows on our Skin (London, 1977). For a discussion of the development of the theme of violence in modern Irish writing see Costello, The Heart's Grown Brutal (Dublin, 1977); for a discussion of contemporary writing about Northern Irish violence see V. Mahon, 'Novel Approaches to Northern Irish Violence', Journal of the Conflict Research Society, 1, no. 3 (September 1978), 35-56.
3 'The Books of Francis Stuart', p. 62.

CONCLUSION

A remarkable quality in Stuart's work is the consistency with which it develops certain ideas. This is especially evident when the development of a central, structuring notion, such as that of redemption, is traced from his earliest work to his latest. Then it is clear that his corpus shows a consistent, developed thought and style. Certain ideas are approached first in his early poetry and short prose writing, such as the interlinking of criminality, passionate love and a kind of resurrection, in 'Criminals', and the notion of the writer's obligation to understand and reconcile spiritual and mundane states, which first emerges in 'In the Hour Before Dawn'. These are developed in his early novels into unusual and individual statements about the ways in which spiritual insight and compassionate understanding can be found and extended to others. In the reflowering of his work, first after the Second World War and then in more recent years, the notion of redemption remains constant but it has become interiorised into a powerful, integrated expression of the possibilities of finding a greater truth through suffering, loss and a revaluing of conventional standards. This development of thought is matched by a development of style. He has explored the relationship between art, memory and reality with increasing subtlety, through the various personae of the narrator in Black List, Section H, the retrospective report of Memorial and, especially, through the shuffled chronology of The High Consistory. There, he works with a special, allusive care to construct a novel which refers deliberately to earlier works, re-expresses certain basic concerns, and in so doing integrates and redefines his corpus and his redemptive vision. When his writing is approached in this way, it is clear that the neglect it has received is undeserved and that it merits further examination and revaluation.

Francis Stuart is a living, working writer, however, and his writing can neither be trapped by definitions which he may go on to break, nor summed up in any final way. It is encouraging to find, though, that an extract from a new novel, of which this writer has recently become aware, seems to confirm the analyses and judgements which have been made so far.[1] The central character of the extract is a man of mature years named Spokane, a name which suggests that he has spoken in the past and that he may speak again. In fact, he is spokesman for an underground magazine, The Kingdom, whose purpose is to reveal a world which is an alternative to the bombing and terrorism of its militarily-dominated contemporary society. Nothing is made exact as far as setting is concerned, but the violence of contemporary northern Ireland is suggested and its morality compared by implication with the lack of free thought in Hitler's Germany, Franco's Spain, and, more problematically, perhaps, with de Gaulle's condemnation and execution of collaborators such as Céline. These are issues raised by the military representatives who visit Spokane, Captain Weismann and Colonel Klotz; in the extract, Spokane's attention is concentrated more fully on the sick dove, reminiscent of Pigeon Irish, which he is looking after, and by his concern for the dove's owner, a young girl named Pieta who is in hospital. Spokane's fears about the ambiguously threatening visit, interrupted by his friend Frank, who is a member of a criminal gang associated with the magazine, first retreat on his visit to the hospital to see Pieta, and then reform in a powerful composite image which is the only reassurance Spokane can give, that 'the wounded fledgling still survived'.[2] That fledgling is Pieta herself, as well as the dove; it is the uneasy peace which the sick dove symbolises; it is the means of free

1 Francis Stuart, 'Excerpt from a New Novel', New Statesman, 105, no. 2717 (April 1983), 22-4.
2 'Excerpt from a New Novel', p. 24.

speech which the possible continuation of the magazine underground assures; it is Spokane's own sense of hope, for which he finds reassurance in his contact with the criminality of Frank and in the complex image of woman-Christ and Virgin which the name Pieta, given to a girl, suggests; and it is the possibility of a different, redemptive insight which it is the purpose of Spokane, as it is of Stuart himself, to reveal.

The reflowerings of Stuart's work culminate in The High Consistory. In a sense, the novel is Stuart's Tempest. Grimes makes himself incommunicado amongst the storms of Flanders when he leaves his island, as Prospero banishes himself from enchantment. In their isolation, both seek a new, redeemed state through profound meditation, Prospero through prayer and Grimes through his visits to the battlefields of World War I. Ultimately, though, they must seek validation of their spiritual state from the mundane world. Grimes presents for scrutiny the canvasses in which he believes can be found 'the other quality' which 'I don't dare to define' and Shakespeare's hero seeks freedom through the audience's forgiveness. Both heroes speak for their authors, perhaps: yet in Francis Stuart's case, although The High Consistory must be seen at present as his culminating work, more surprising developments in his work remain possible and likely.

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